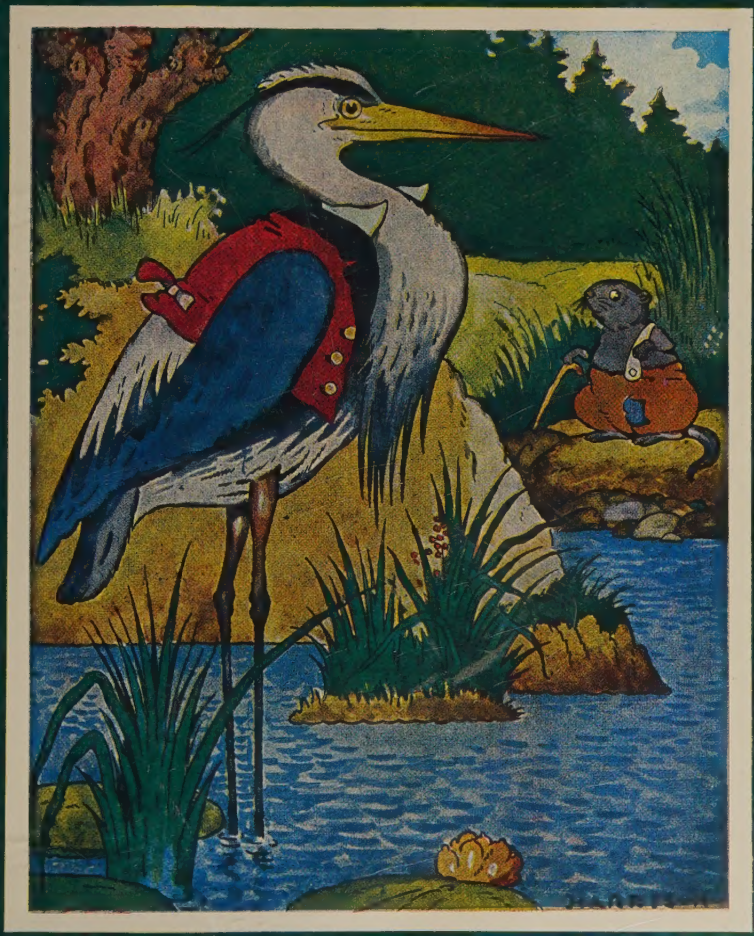
Smiling Pool Series

LONGLEGS THE HERON



THORNTON W. BURGESS

AUTHOR OF

"MOTHER WEST WIND SERIES" "GREEN MEADOW SERIES"

LONGLEGS THE HERON

By THORNTON W. BURGESS
Author of *"Mother West Wind Series"*

LONGLEGS THE HERON is a famous fisherman usually possessed of a wonderful patience. But sometimes he loses his temper and then, more often than not, gone is the meal on which he has been planning!

Peter Rabbit looked on Longlegs as an enemy, but when one of the little Herons was caught in a trap, Peter helped save him. After that, the two became good friends and Peter learned much about the Heron family and their travels.

Read about the good times and exciting adventures of the other animals who live around the Smiling Pool in the books listed on the back flap.

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Longlegs the Heron

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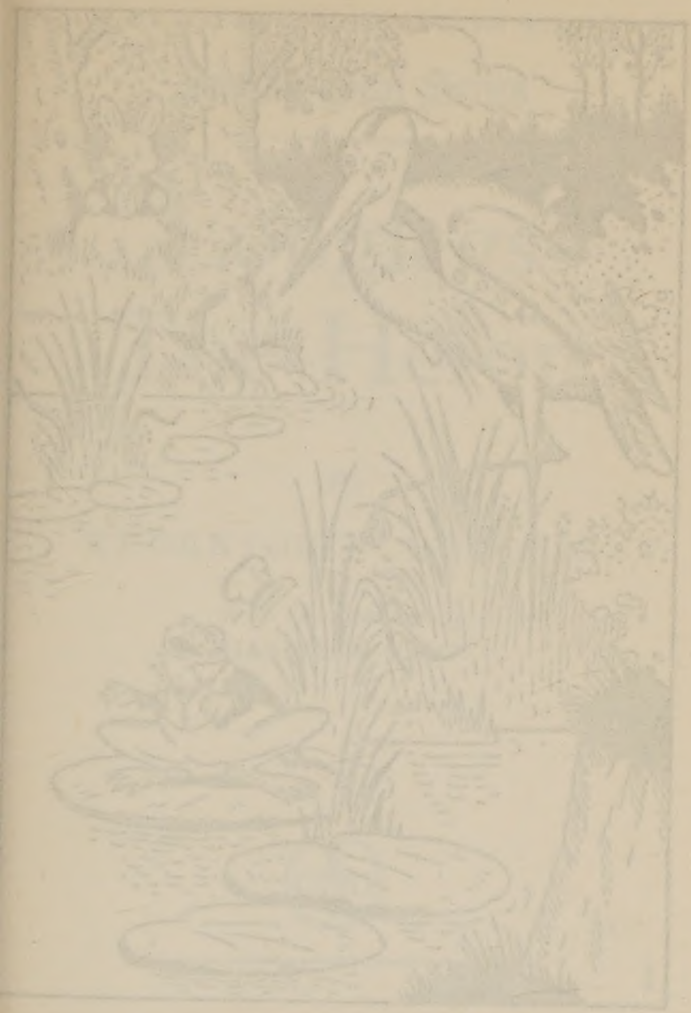

"What ails Grandfather Frog?" muttered Peter to Himself.

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Smiling Pool Series

Longlegs The Heron

By

THORNTON W. BURGESS

With Illustrations by
HARRISON CADY

Grosset & Dunlap

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CHAPTER I

A LONE FISHERMAN

Who watchful waits and patience keeps
Is sure to dine before he sleeps.

Longlegs.

Longlegs the Blue Heron said this over to himself again and again, just to keep his courage up. He needed to, for he was hungry and all the time growing hungrier. He was standing among the bulrushes on the edge of the Smiling Pool. He had been standing there for ever and ever so long. You know Longlegs is a fisherman, a famous fisherman, and long ago learned that the greatest virtue a fisherman

can possess is patience. So, ever since he was a little fellow, Longlegs has trained himself to be patient.

This particular morning he had arrived at the Smiling Pool a wee bit later than usual. Just before he arrived Plunger the Fish Hawk had chanced that way and had seen a tempting fish in the Smiling Pool. He had shot down out of the sky into the Smiling Pool with a great splash, which had given all the fish, big and little, a great fright. Then he had flown away and taken with him that tempting fish which had led him to make the plunge. The ripples he had made when he plunged into the water had hardly disappeared when Longlegs arrived.

There was nothing to show that anything had happened there in the Smiling Pool and Longlegs did n't have the least doubt that he would soon catch a good breakfast. If he had known about Plunger the Fish Hawk, he would have tried his luck somewhere else. But he did n't know and no one told him.

"It is no business of mine," said Jerry Muskrat to himself, as he watched Longlegs drop his long legs, close his wings, and take his stand among the bulrushes, "but if I know anything about it, he is going to wait a long time for his breakfast unless some foolish Pollywogs happen his way, and I suspect that Grandfather Frog will see that they don't."

Jerry was quite right about Grandfather Frog. Plunger had frightened him quite as much as he had frightened the fish, and Grandfather Frog had dived headlong from his big green lily pad. When he cautiously poked his head out of the water again, it was just in time to see Longlegs arrive. He knew what Longlegs had come for. He had no fear for himself, because the water was so deep where his big green lily pad grew that Longlegs could n't wade near enough to reach him ; but he was worried on account of his children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who are sometimes called Pollywogs and sometimes Tadpoles. He knew that they dearly love to play among the bulrushes.

"I'll have to keep them away from there," he grumbled, and once more disappeared. He passed the word along to all the Pollywogs that if they wanted to grow up to be respectable and respected Frogs, they must keep away from the bulrushes that morning and find some other place to play. Then he climbed up on his big, green lily pad to watch for foolish green flies and keep an eye on Longlegs the Heron.

It was some time before Longlegs suspected that anything was wrong. He just concluded that he had been seen when he arrived. He counted on this being forgotten if he kept perfectly still. He knows how easy it is to forget.

"If I keep perfectly still, those who saw me come will forget all about it, or else think that I have gone away," thought he. So he stood among the bulrushes without moving for the longest time. Had you seen him there you might have thought him asleep unless you happened to see his eyes. There was nothing sleepy about those. They were very bright and keen as they watched for some sign of careless minnows or heedless Polly-wogs.

So Longlegs stood among the bulrushes and waited and waited, a perfect image of patience, all the time growing hungrier and hungrier. Not a single silvery gleam of a minnow, not the wriggle of a Polly-

wog's tail, did he see. It was strange, very strange. He was tempted to give up and try his luck somewhere else. But he remembered that patience is almost sure to be rewarded sooner or later, and so he waited and kept on waiting, like the good fisherman that he is. And at last his patience was rewarded. He saw a school of little minnows playing about and coming nearer and nearer to the bulrushes. Longleg's eyes sparkled and once more he repeated that little verse:

"Who watchful waits and patience keeps,
Is sure to dine before he sleeps."

CHAPTER II

LONGLEG'S BREAKFAST IS SNATCHED AWAY

Don't count your chicks 'til they are hatched,
Nor eat your dinner 'til you get it.
Don't try to fly 'til you get wings,
Nor wash your face until you 've wet it.

Longlegs.

As Longlegs stood on the edge of the Smiling Pool, his eyes were bright with joy. Just a little way out in front of him a school of minnows were at play, and little by little they were drawing nearer and nearer. Longlegs knows all about minnows. He knows just how heedless and careless they are when at play, and he knows that

they dearly love to play among the bulrushes. You see, when Longlegs is n't about, they are safer there than anywhere else, and they know it. Out in the deep water live big fish who are quite as fond of minnows as is Longlegs himself, but where the bulrushes grow the water is very shallow. It is not deep enough for the big fish, but plenty deep enough for little minnows. Then, too, there is always plenty to eat there.

So Longlegs felt sure that those minnows he was watching would soon come swimming around his very feet, for he knew that they did not know that he was there. He had waited very long and his stomach was so empty that he felt

as if the bottom was dropping out of it. Not so much as a single Pollywog had shown itself. So when at last Longlegs saw those minnows he was happy. He felt absolutely sure of one of them at least and he meant to pick out the biggest and fattest.

Now it is one of the laws of the Great World that no one can be sure of a thing until he has it. People think they are sure of things. Buster Bear thought he was sure of all the honey in Busy Bee's storehouse, but he had eaten but half of it when Farmer Brown's Boy gave him such a fright that he ran away, leaving the other half. More than once Reddy Fox has thought he was sure of catch-

ing Peter Rabbit, only to have Peter get away most unexpectedly. Then there was the time when little Mr. Striped Snake caught one of the children of Stickytoes the Tree Toad and had already begun to swallow him. He had every reason to think that he was sure of little Stickytoes, but along came Farmer Brown's Boy and made him cough little Stickytoes up. So you see it is of no use even to think you are sure of anything until you have it where it cannot get away, or be taken away from you. The only time you can be sure of a dinner is when it is in your stomach.

Longlegs knew this. Anyway, he ought to have known it. But

the fact, the plain fact, remains that he thought he was sure of one of those minnows. He could almost feel the comfortable sensation of one of them wriggling down his long throat to his empty stomach. Nearer the careless minnows came and nearer. The head of Longlegs was drawn back ready to be shot forward with the speed of lightning. The biggest, fattest minnow was lazily swimming towards him and was almost within reach.

Right then something happened. Out from the Big Hickory Tree on the bank of the Smiling Pool flew another fisherman. He was not very big. He wore a pointed cap which made his head look too

big for his body and he modestly, but handsomely, dressed in blue and gray and white. Straight out right over that school of minnows he flew and for just a second seemed to stand still in the air. Then he closed his wings and shot down. There was a silvery splash and then up he came with that biggest, fattest minnow in his stout bill, and with a harsh, rattling cry of triumph flew back to the Big Hickory Tree, where he thumped the minnow on a branch and then began to gulp it down headfirst. It was Rattles the Kingfisher.

CHAPTER III

LONGLEGS CALLS RATTLES A THIEF

The reckless tongue is quite the worst
Of all the things I know.
So watch your tongue and guard your tongue
And let your tongue be slow.

Longlegs.

A QUICK tongue is apt to be a reckless tongue, and a reckless tongue is one that says things without stopping to think if they be true, or of what harm they may do by being repeated. The tongues of some people seem to be reckless all the time. Gossipy tongues are nearly always reckless. Other tongues become reckless when their owners lose their tempers. It was this way with the

tongue of Longlegs the Heron that beautiful summer day. Longlegs lost his temper and then he said things which he would n't have said if he had stopped to think.

You see, Longlegs was very hungry and he had waited patiently for a long, long time for his breakfast. You know, Longlegs is a fisherman and he is one of those who waits for his meals to come to them, instead of going after them. Little Joe Otter is a fisherman, but he is the other kind. He is such a famous swimmer that he can chase and catch a fish. Longlegs is n't a swimmer at all; he has to wait for the fish to swim near enough to where he is standing so that he can catch

one by darting his long neck downward like lightning and snapping up the fish in his great spearlike bill.

So on this particular morning, when Longlegs had waited and waited so patiently, it had been more than he could bear to have Rattles the Kingfisher suddenly dart down and seize the very biggest, fattest minnow which Longlegs had picked out as surely his, at the same time frightening away all the other minnows.

"You're a thief!" he screamed at Rattles. "You're a robber! That was my fish!"

Rattles the Kingfisher chuckled. It wasn't a pleasant chuckle to hear, because Rattles hasn't a

pleasant voice. In fact, it is a very unpleasant voice. He did n't reply at once, because he was too busy swallowing that big, fat minnow. It was so big that it stuck in his throat, and he had to twist and squirm and wriggle to get it down. But at last it was down. Then he looked across at Longlegs and chuckled again.

"If it were yours, why did n't you catch it?" he asked. "I did n't even know you were over there. Not that it would have made any difference," he added, with another harsh chuckle, "for fish belong to whoever can catch them, and that fat minnow did n't belong to you, because you had n't caught it."

"It did too!" retorted Longlegs, and his voice was as harsh as Rattles' voice. "I was just going to catch it when you stole it. You're a thief! I'm going to tell everybody that you're a thief! You stole my breakfast!"

Rattles chuckled again. You see, having that big, fat minnow in his stomach, he simply could n't lose his temper. Temper, you know, is very largely a matter of an empty or a full stomach. The stomach of Longlegs was empty and so his temper was very, very bad, while the stomach of Rattles was full and so his temper was very, very good.

"Go ahead! Go ahead, Longlegs!" said he. "You tell every-

body that I'm a thief, and I'll tell everybody that you are a long-legged, long-necked, cross-grained, bad-tempered, lazy-do-nothing, who waits for his meals to come to him instead of going after them. Everybody knows that I never stole anything in my life, and everybody knows that you are just what I said you are. It is true I have n't many friends, because I don't want them. But it is just as true that you have n't either. It is easy enough to call names, and I guess I can do that as well as you can. So go ahead! Calling me a thief does n't make me one, and you know as well as I do that that minnow did n't belong to anybody until it was caught. Just

to pay you for losing your temper, I'm going to stay right here by the Smiling Pool; and you know that I can beat you fishing every time. If you'll take my advice, you'll go over to the Big River. You'll fill your stomach sooner there and then you'll feel better."

Longlegs opened his mouth for an angry retort and then closed it without saying a word. He knew that what Rattles had said was true, and to tell the truth he was a wee bit ashamed. Finally he spread his big wings and flapped away in the direction of the Big River. Rattles the Kingfisher chuckled noisily. Then he fixed his bright eyes on the Smiling Pool to watch for minnows.

CHAPTER IV

PETER VISITS THE SMILING POOL

We are apt to think our lot
Worse than others when it 's not.

Longlegs.

It was hot. Even in the dear Old Briar-patch it was hot, despite the shade from the bushes and friendly brambles. Peter Rabbit is n't fond of water, as you know, but for once he almost wished that he was. He thought of Billy Mink and Jerry Muskrat and Little Joe Otter and Spotty the Turtle and Grandfather Frog, all of whom love to spend much of their time in the water. He

thought of them, and something very like envy crept into Peter's heart.

"Hot weather does n't make much difference to them," panted Peter. "No matter how hot it is they can keep cool. I don't see why Old Mother Nature did n't make me fond of the water too. My, my, my, it seems to me this is the hottest day ever. I don't like it. I'll be getting a sunstroke or something like that. Why don't the Merry Little Breezes chase up some clouds?"

Peter was getting fretful.

He was wise enough to go down in his underground house after a while. You know it was an old house that Johnny Chuck's

grandfather had dug in the middle of the Old Briar-patch long ago. Peter and Mrs. Peter found it very handy once in a while. Peter never had fixed it up any because he was too lazy. He never does any work that is n't necessary, and he had n't considered it necessary to fix up that old house. So long as he could get in and out and the roof did n't fall in, he was satisfied.

Now Peter found that old house fairly cool and he ought to have been contented. But he was n't. He kept thinking that Grandfather Frog and Jerry Muskrat and the others in the Smiling Pool were even more comfortable than he. And while they were

comfortable they did n't have to stay down underground, where they could see and know nothing of what was going on about them. And so Peter continued to be envious and discontented.

Late that afternoon, just as it was about time for the Black Shadows to come creeping out from the Purple Hills, and the air had cooled a wee bit, Peter decided to run over to the Smiling Pool. It would be cooling just to look at the water and to hear the gurgling of the Laughing Brook. Besides, it was a long time since he had been over there, and he wanted to know what had been going on.

So Peter scampered, lipperty

lipperty-lip, over to the Smiling Pool. As he drew near he could hear Grandfather Frog's deep voice leading the Frog chorus, "Chug-arum! chug-arum! chug-arum! chug-arum!" It was clear that Grandfather Frog was happy and entirely satisfied with things as they were. It was clear he had n't minded the heat at all that day.

Presently Peter was where he could see the shore of the Smiling Pool, and something moving caught his eyes. He stopped and sat up to look, for sitting up he could see better. What he saw was a very tall bird, a bird with a very long neck and very long legs. That long neck was stretched up its full length, and Peter knew its

owner was looking at something. Then that long neck was folded back until the head with its long, straight, sharp bill rested between the shoulders. The owner evidently was satisfied with what he had seen. Peter knew who it was. Of course. It was Longlegs the Great Blue Heron.

Peter was just going to start on when Longlegs took a careful step and again stood motionless. Peter was just losing patience when Longlegs did it over again. "Longlegs is hunting his dinner," thought Peter. "I wonder who he is after."

Suddenly Peter guessed. Longlegs was slowly stealing toward that part of the Smiling Pool

where the lily pads grew and where Grandfather Frog was at that very minute leading the Frog chorus.

CHAPTER V

WHAT SHOULD PETER DO?

When in doubt just what your part
Heed the promptings of your heart.

Longlegs.

"CAN it be," thought Peter Rabbit, "that Longlegs the Heron is going to try again to catch Grandfather Frog? He has been trying ever since I first made the acquaintance of either of them. I should think he would know by this time that it is useless to spend his time that way. He is merely wasting it. Perhaps, after all, he is n't after Grandfather Frog, but hopes to catch a foolish

young Frog. I'll just hide over there where I can see all that happens."

So Peter in his turn crept forward very quietly, taking the greatest care not to make the teeniest sound, and keeping as close to the ground as he could. So he gained the bank of the Smiling Pool just where the lily pads were and peeped over. Longlegs had n't seen him. Longlegs was too intent on what he was doing to see anything else.

Just below, seated on one of the big, green, lily pads, was Grandfather Frog. He was back to Peter and it was quite evident that he was enjoying his part as leader of the Frog chorus. "Chug-arum,

chug-arum, chug-arum," he kept saying over and over in his great, deep voice, and he was so busy about it that he was n't watching out for danger.

But what Peter noticed right away was that Grandfather Frog was n't sitting on his favorite big, green, lily pad, which was out in such deep water that Longlegs never could reach him there. Instead he was sitting on a lily pad close to shore. If Longlegs should get behind him, he certainly would catch Grandfather Frog.

Peter turned to watch Longlegs. Step by step, with long pauses between, Longlegs was drawing near. Each foot was put down so carefully that there was n't the

faintest sound. His eyes were fixed on Grandfather Frog and at the least hint that Grandfather Frog was going to look about with his big goggly eyes, Longlegs was as motionless as if he could n't move. Whenever Grandfather Frog stopped saying "chug-arum," Longlegs would stand perfectly still. When Grandfather Frog would begin again, Longlegs would move ahead with those slow, careful steps.

What should Peter do? Should he warn Grandfather Frog? He knew that it was the law of Old Mother Nature that Longlegs should hunt Frogs and that the Frogs should watch out for him. He knew that Longlegs had a right to Grandfather Frog if he could

catch him. Longlegs had as much right as any one to live, and Frogs were food for him. Without Frogs and fish he would starve.

Perhaps, after all, Grandfather Frog did see Longlegs and was merely waiting until the last minute. Or if he did n't see him yet, perhaps he would. If he should warn Grandfather Frog, it would make Longlegs very angry and Peter did n't feel like quarreling with anybody. He was tempted to steal away and leave Grandfather Frog and Longlegs just as if he had n't been there at all. Then if anything happened it would n't be his fault.

But would n't it? If anything did happen, he would always know

that he might have prevented it. So Peter didn't steal away. He remained right there. Nearer and nearer drew Longlegs the Heron. Louder and louder sang Grandfather Frog.

"Chug-arum! chug-arum! chug-arum! chug-arum!" sang Grandfather Frog.

"What shall I do? What shall I do? What shall I do?" said Peter over and over to himself.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT PETER DID DO

You 'll ne'er regret the kindly deed
That aids another in his need.

Longlegs.

Longlegs the Heron was getting nearer and nearer to Grandfather Frog, and still Grandfather Frog sat on the big green lily pad close to the shore and led the Frog chorus, "Chug-arum, chug-arum, chug-arum, chug-arum," as if there was n't such a thing as danger in all the Great World. I suppose Grandfather Frog thought he was singing. I suspect he would have called it that. But to Peter Rabbit, sitting on

the bank, he was merely shouting in that great, deep, gruff voice of his. But whether singing or shouting, he was enjoying it, was Grandfather Frog.

Peter kept hoping that Grandfather Frog would turn his head and see Longlegs the Heron. But when he did stop it was only for a minute and then merely to listen to the other Frogs all around the Smiling Pool. Not one of them had such a great, deep voice as his. Grandfather Frog was very proud of that voice. Peter couldn't help thinking that it would have been better, much better, to have been less proud of his voice and more watchful for his safety.

The eyes of Longlegs the Heron gleamed with hunger. Grandfather Frog was so big that he would make a whole meal. There would be no need of any more hunting that night. Just a few more careful steps and he would be near enough to strike with that long, sharp bill. Then he would not only have that good dinner, but he would settle an old grudge. You see, for three years he had been trying to catch Grandfather Frog and for three years Grandfather Frog had been too smart for him. Moreover, Grandfather Frog had many, many times spoiled the hunting of Longlegs by giving warning to all the other Frogs.

"What ails Grandfather Frog?" muttered Peter to himself. "He must be getting careless or foolish in his old age. He ought to know better than to sit so near the shore. In two more steps Longlegs will be near enough to strike. I hate to spoil the hunting of Longlegs, but I can't bear to think of the Smiling Pool without Grandfather Frog. Why, nights I can hear that great deep voice of his way over in the dear Old Briar-patch. Stupid! Why don't you turn around and see that long-legged hunter?"

This was addressed to Grandfather Frog, but Peter said it under his breath, so of course Grandfather Frog did n't hear it,

and of course he didn't turn Longlegs took one more careful step and Peter could see him draw his head back for the swift stroke that he would take with the next step. He knew just how that long neck would shoot out like a flash. If Grandfather Frog didn't jump in about two seconds, it would be too late.

"Chug-arum! chug-arum! chug-arum!" said Grandfather Frog. "Chug- " He didn't finish. You see just then Longlegs had started to take that last careful step, and Peter Rabbit had thumped the ground with all his might. It was a very loud thump. Peter had meant it to be. It had startled Grandfather Frog so that

he had cut short that "chug-arum" right in the middle and had dived headlong into the water without even looking to see what had frightened him. He learned when he was very young that this is always the safest thing to do. Safety for him lies down in the mud at the bottom of the Smiling Pool, and it is always best to seek safety first and inquire later what the danger is.

CHAPTER VII

LONGLEGS LOSES HIS TEMPER

Who keeps his temper well in hand
The situation will command.

Longlegs.

With that loud thump by Peter Rabbit on the bank of the Smiling Pool right behind Grandfather Frog, things happened fast. My, I should say so! Grandfather Frog dived into the water with a great splash and disappeared in the mud at the bottom out where the water was deep. Longlegs the Heron made a quick step and lunged with his long neck, but his great bill reached just too late that lily pad

where Grandfather Frog had been sitting.

It was provoking. It was more than provoking. He had so nearly caught Grandfather Frog that the water was splashed in his face as Grandfather Frog dived. Perhaps it is no wonder that Longlegs lost his temper. Anybody would have been likely to, when his dinner disappeared just as it was about to be swallowed. Longlegs turned like a flash. There on the bank sat Peter Rabbit. He looked as if he might be trying to hug himself with joy over Grandfather Frog's escape.

Longlegs knew instantly what had frightened Grandfather Frog. With a harsh scream he whirled

and started for Peter Rabbit, and his eyes fairly blazed with anger; they were quite terrible. Now Longlegs the Heron may be awkward-looking, but he can move quickly when he wants to, and he wanted to now. His legs are long, as you know, and when he helps himself along with half-raised wings, he can get over the ground fast.

Peter was so surprised that he fell over backward, which was fortunate for him. That spearlike bill of Longlegs just missed him. Peter scrambled to his feet and away he went, lipperty-lipperty-lip, twisting and dodging. Longlegs, with his great wings half raised, raced after him, screaming with anger. For a few minutes

Peter dodged as he never had dodged before. Then he got a chance to really use those long legs of his and away he went, lipperty-lipperty-lip, as only Peter can.

Then Longlegs gave up. For a minute he danced with rage. "I'll pay you for this, Peter Rabbit! Some day I'll pay you for this!" he screamed, and his voice was not at all a pleasant thing to hear. Then, because he knew it was useless to hunt any more that evening at the Smiling Pool, he flapped his great wings and with his long legs straight out behind him and his neck folded back on his shoulders, flew away across the Green Meadows toward the Big River.

Peter Rabbit sighed with relief. "My, my, my, what a temper!" he exclaimed. "I wouldn't have a temper like that for anything in the world. But I don't know as I blame him so very much. To have a dinner jump right out of your mouth, as it were, and all on account of a third person, must be enough to make any one get tempery. But I'm glad I saved Grandfather Frog. I am so. I guess it is safe now to go back and see how the old fellow is. Longlegs doesn't belong up here at the Smiling Pool, anyway. He belongs down by the Big River. If he had stayed where he belongs, he wouldn't have lost his temper, and I wouldn't have made an enemy of him. It

will be a long time before he will forgive me for this."

Peter sighed ruefully. Then he started back for the Smiling Pool. When he got there, Grandfather Frog was not sitting on any of the big green lily pads. Peter looked carefully all around and presently he saw two big goggly eyes and the top of a green head out in the deep water. It was Grandfather Frog.

Peter chuckled. "Grandfather Frog is playing safe," thought he.

CHAPTER VIII

GRANDFATHER IS HASTY

Before you speak be sure you *know*
That what you *think* is really so.
Longlegs.

It happened that Grandfather Frog had come up from his hiding place in the mud at the bottom of the Smiling Pool just as Peter Rabbit arrived on the bank. Of course, by that time Longlegs the Heron was no longer in sight. He had gone over to the Big River. No one but Peter was to be seen. Instantly Grandfather Frog knew what had frightened him so. He knew that Peter had thumped the bank right behind

him as he sat on the big green lily pad close to the shore, leading the Frog chorus. And right then and there Grandfather Frog made a mistake. Yes, sir, he did so. He suspected Peter of having stolen up and frightened him just for a joke.

Now Grandfather Frog is old and wise, but old as he is and wise as he is, he has n't yet learned always to keep his temper. In fact, he is a bit testy and I am afraid his temper is rather short. He glared up at Peter. Then he swam to the nearest lily pad big enough to hold him, scrambled out on it, and faced Peter.

Grandfather Frog's big goggly eyes snapped angrily and he puffed

out his white and yellow waistcoat with indignation. In fact, he was so swelled out with anger that he looked to be in danger of bursting. Anyway, that is how he looked to Peter. Peter didn't know just what to make of it. He was just opening his mouth to congratulate Grandfather Frog on his escape when Grandfather Frog startled him with such a deep angry, "chug-arum" that Peter forgot what he was going to say.

"Chug-arum!" exclaimed Grandfather Frog. "Chug-arum! I suppose you think it is smart to steal up behind your elders and try to scare them. I suppose that is your idea of a joke."

Peter's long ears stood straight

up in astonishment. "Why, Grandfather Frog — " he began.

But Grandfather Frog was n't listening. He did n't even know that Peter was speaking. His own great, deep, gruff voice wholly drowned Peter's voice. "Chugarum! I would have you to know that such things are not funny at all. No one with a grain of respect for others or an atom of thoughtfulness would do such a thing. But I might have expected as much from such a heedless fellow as you. Your head is so full of emptiness that there is n't room for consideration of anybody else."

Peter stamped the ground with his stout hindfeet suddenly and hard. It was the only way he

could get Grandfather Frog's attention, and Peter was beginning to grow angry himself. Grandfather Frog stopped to glare at Peter.

"A nice return this is for saving your life!" stormed Peter. "So my head is full of emptiness. Well, the next time I see you in danger, you can look out for yourself.

"If I had a pair of big goggly eyes like yours and could n't see any better than you do, I would think it was about time to quit."

"What? Wh-wh-what is that?" demanded Grandfather Frog. "Who saved my life? What are you talking about, Peter Rabbit?"

"If I had n't frightened you into diving just when you did,

you would n't be here now," retorted Peter.

"Where would I be?" demanded Grandfather Frog.

"Over on the shore of the Big River, in the stomach of Longlegs the Heron," replied Peter, a twinkle coming into his eyes.

Grandfather Frog stared at Peter very hard.

"I don't believe it," said he gruffly.

CHAPTER IX

GRANDFATHER FROG IS HUMBLE

Who finds he 's in the wrong should try
To right it, and eat humble pie.

Longlegs.

PETER RABBIT did n't know whether to laugh or to be angry when Grandfather Frog bluntly told him that he did n't believe his story about Longlegs the Heron. Wisely he decided to laugh.

"I don't blame you for not believing it, Grandfather Frog," said he, "but it is the truth, just the same. You escaped Longlegs by the toenails of your hind feet, and that is about all. If you had

waited to find out what I thumped for, you would know by this time exactly how long the neck of Longlegs the Heron is."

"Longlegs the Heron has n't been near the Smiling Pool to-day," declared Grandfather Frog gruffly.

"Oh, yes, he has," retorted Peter. "He was here this evening. You were so busy leading the Frog chorus you forgot everything else, and he stole up right behind you. If you had been on your usual big, green lily pad out where the water is deep, you would have been all right. I don't know what you were thinking of to sit so close to shore. You were within easy reach of Longlegs when I made you jump"

Grandfather Frog still looked as if he thought Peter was making up that story, and Peter saw it. He looked down in the mud just in front of him and his face brightened.

"Come over here, Grandfather Frog, and I'll prove that what I told you is true."

Grandfather Frog hesitated. But he could n't well refuse, so he swam over to the shore where Peter was squatting.

"There!" cried Peter, pointing to the mud at his feet.

Grandfather Frog looked and such a funny expression as passed over his face! There in the mud were the footprints of Longlegs the Heron! He could see just where

Longlegs had stood when Peter had thumped. Grandfather Frog gulped hard once or twice and shut and opened his great goggly eyes several times. Then he spoke, and his voice was not nearly so gruff as it had been. Grandfather Frog was humble, very, very humble.

"I hope, Peter Rabbit, that you will forget all I said just as if I had n't said it," said he. "I guess I am getting childish in my old age. I know now that I owe my life to you, and I am very grateful. I shall not forget it, Peter Rabbit; I shall not forget it. Perhaps some day I may be able to do as much for you. You see, I dived so quickly that I did n't see Longlegs at all, and I stayed

down in the mud so long that when I came up he had gone, and there was no one but you. So I jumped at conclusions. It is a bad thing, Peter, a very bad thing to jump at conclusions. Don't do it. Don't ever do it. I never will again."

"I don't blame you a bit," said Peter. "I guess I would have done the same had I been in your place. My, but Longlegs was angry! He chased me way up on the Green Meadows, and I do believe he would have killed me if he had caught me."

"No doubt of it, Peter. No doubt of it," returned Grandfather Frog. "He is a dangerous fellow, is Longlegs, when he is angry. You must keep out of his way for

some time to come. He is n't the kind to forgive and forget. Neither am I the kind to forget. I don't know how I shall do it, but some day I shall repay you for what you have done for me. Now if you 'll excuse me, I must lead the chorus again. If they don't hear my voice, all my relatives will think something has happened to me. Chug-arum! chug-arum! chug-arum! chug-arum!"

CHAPTER X

PETER HEARS OF AN ACCIDENT

Right of heart is he who will
Wish his enemy no ill.

Longlegs.

For quite a while Peter Rabbit sat on the bank of the Smiling Pool, watching Grandfather Frog lead the Frog chorus. Peter had come over there hoping to find it cooler than in the dear Old Briar-patch. Then had come the adventure with Longlegs the Heron and he had had to run and dodge and twist and turn to escape from the anger of Longlegs. So Peter was feeling

the heat more than ever when finally he had a chance to sit down in peace.

But somehow just looking at the water made him feel cooler, and after a little some of the Merry Little Breezes of Old Mother West Wind discovered Peter and how hot he was, and they took turns in gently blowing on him until at last he no longer envied Grandfather Frog and the other little people who are good swimmers and delight to spend much of their time in the water.

At last it came time for Old Mother West Wind to gather the Merry Little Breezes into her great bag and take them to their home behind the Purple Hills. Peter

did n't like to have them go, but he knew they must.

"There has been an accident on the edge of the swamp down the Laughing Brook toward the Big River," whispered one of the Merry Little Breezes in one of Peter's long ears.

Peter pricked up both long ears.

"What kind of an accident?" he demanded.

"Sh-h-h! It would never do for it to reach certain ears. No, indeed, it would never do at all, for then something worse might happen," whispered the Merry Little Breeze. "It is a secret. I should n't have told you."

"I can keep a secret," replied Peter in a hasty whisper, "and I

promise you I will keep this one. What has happened?"

"One of the children of Long-legs the Heron is in great trouble," replied the Merry Little Breeze. "If Billy Mink or Reddy Fox or Old Man Coyote should happen along that way, I fear it would be the end of that young Heron. I could n't do anything to help him myself, but perhaps you can. Anyway, I 'm sure you will not do him any harm, and that is why I told you. Now I must go, or I shall be left out of Mother West Wind's big bag and have to wander about all alone all night. Good-by, Peter."

The Merry Little Breeze danced away. Peter sat up to stare down

the Laughing Brook toward the swamp through which the Laughing Brook made its way to the Big River.

"I wonder what that accident can be," thought Peter. "If it was any one but one of the children of Longlegs the Heron, I would hurry down there and see if there is anything I can do. But I guess I don't want to do anything for Longlegs. If he had caught me, he would have killed me this very evening, and I guess it won't be safe for me to go near him for a long time. If one of his children is in trouble, it serves him right. I'm glad of it. Yes, sir, I'm glad of it. I am so."

That was n't true. Peter was

just trying to make himself believe it was true. It would n't have been true had it been Longlegs himself who had met with that accident, for Peter is too tender-hearted to be glad to have even his enemies hurt. And this was n't Longlegs, but one of his children. Peter tried to forget about it, but he could n't. And in spite of himself, he began to wonder if there was anything he could do for that young Heron.

CHAPTER XI

PETER FINDS THE YOUNG HERON

Somehow friendship always doubles
When it shares another's troubles.

Longlegs.

The more Peter Rabbit thought about that young Heron who had met with an accident, the more he felt that he ought to go and see if there was anything he could do to help. Then quite suddenly he remembered that he had forgotten to ask the Merry Little Breeze what kind of an accident it was.

"Stupid, stupid, stupid," muttered Peter to himself. "Why didn't I ask a few questions

while I had the chance? I don't see what could happen to a young Heron, anyway."

Right then and there Peter's curiosity was aroused. That settled the question of whether or not he would go hunt for that young Heron. He just *had* to know what had happened. Curiosity would n't give him any peace at all. What kind of an accident was it? How had it happened? What had the Merry Little Breeze meant by saying that something worse might happen if word of it reached the ears of certain people? Peter *had* to know. That was all there was to it — he *had* to know.

It was not yet dark, though it

would be soon. If he hurried he could get down to the swamp before the Black Shadows made it too dark. Up bounced Peter and away he went, lipperty-lipperty-lip, as fast as he could go. He forgot all about wanting to keep cool. He forgot how he had suffered from the heat all that day. Lipperty-lipperty-lip, he scampered along the bank of the Laughing Brook toward the swamp over near the Big River.

"Let me see, the Merry Little Breeze said that that young Heron had met with an accident on the edge of the swamp, but did n't say which edge, and I forgot to ask," thought Peter, as he scampered along. "If it is the edge

next the Big River, I'll never find him to-night; it will be too dark before I can get there. The thing for me is to hunt along the edge where the Laughing Brook enters the swamp. If I don't find him there, I'll wait until morning to look along the other edge."

So Peter kept along the bank of the Laughing Brook to the edge of the swamp. When he reached it, he stopped running. He moved slowly and carefully, and every few steps he sat up to look and listen. He did n't know where to look. That young Heron might be in a tree. However, Peter felt sure he was n't, for he remembered what the

Merry Little Breeze had said of the danger from Reddy Fox and Old Man Coyote. To be in danger from them, he must be where they could get him, and they could n't do that if he were in a tree.

Peter stole softly along. The great ferns growing there hid him. He peeped out from under them just in time to see a great bird alight beyond a little turn in the Laughing Brook. Peter knew who it was. Of course. It was Mrs. Longlegs. Then he heard certain sounds that he knew could be made only by a young Heron being fed. He knew then that he would have no trouble in finding what he was seeking. Around

that little bend in the Laughing Brook he would find that young Heron who had met with an accident.

Slowly, carefully, taking the greatest care not to move a single fern, Peter crept forward. He had no wish to be discovered by Mrs. Longlegs. He had had one experience with Longlegs and that was enough, quite enough. Mrs. Longlegs might be even worse. Peter had a very great respect for that long, sharp bill and those stout wings.

So he was very, very careful and at last reached a place where he could peep out. There stood the young Heron on the edge of the Laughing Brook.

CHAPTER XII

THE DREADFUL ACCIDENT

Alas, that man so seldom pauses
To think of all the pain he causes.

Longlegs.

PETER RABBIT was puzzled. Yes, sir, Peter was puzzled. Never had he been more puzzled. There, just in the water at the edge of the Laughing Brook, stood the young Heron for whom he had been looking. At least, Peter did n't once think that it might be another young Heron. He was a well-grown young Heron. In fact, he was nearly as big as his mother. And so far as Peter could see at

first, there was nothing the matter with him.

But Peter knew that there was something wrong because his mother, Mrs. Longlegs, had just been feeding him, and he was plenty big enough and old enough to catch his own food. She would n't do his fishing for him if there were not some reason why he could n't do it for himself. Peter remained hidden under some great ferns and watched and wondered. And the longer he watched, the greater became his curiosity. What could be the matter with that young Heron? What could?

Presently Mrs. Longlegs flapped her great wings and with her long legs trailing out behind her like

a tail, and her long neck folded back so that her head rested on her shoulders, disappeared over the tops of the trees toward the Big River. The young Heron, left alone, looked most unhappy. His wings drooped. He hung his head. He looked very, very sorrowful and forlorn. Presently he took a step forward with one foot and then tried to with the other. But this other foot would n't come. It was held fast by something in the water, something Peter could n't see.

The young Heron would have been upset had it not been for his great wings. With these he flapped wildly and so kept his balance. Then he turned and

pecked savagely at something in the water. But in a minute or two he gave this up and once more became a picture of hopelessness. Such a look of longing and fear and pain as there was in his eyes as he looked up to the tree tops over which his mother had vanished.

Peter hopped out from his hiding place. At the first sound the young Heron turned to face him. The feathers on his head and neck were raised. His eyes blazed. One of his great wings was drawn partly in front of him as if to protect him. It was quite clear that that young Heron intended to fight for his life if need be.

Peter stopped. He stopped very suddenly. He had no inten-

tion of going within reach of that spearlike bill.

"Don't be afraid; it is only me," said he meekly.

"Who are you?" hissed the young Heron, looking not the teeniest bit less warlike.

"Peter Rabbit," replied Peter. "You have nothing to fear from me. I-I heard you had met with an accident, and I have come over to see if there is anything I can do for you. What is the matter, anyway?"

The young Heron looked relieved, but he was still watchful and suspicious. You see he had not been out in the Great World long enough to know whom to fear and distrust and whom not to.

"SOMETHING SPRANG OUT OF THE MUD AND CAUGHT ME BY ONE FOOT AND HURT TERRIBLY."

"I'm caught by one foot," said he.

"So I see," replied Peter; "but what has caught you?"

"I don't know," replied the young Heron. "I was walking along the edge of the water when suddenly something sprang out of the mud and caught me by one foot and hurt terribly. It still hurts, for it has terrible jaws. I've nearly broken my bill on it trying to make it let go, but it won't. Perhaps you will know what kind of a creature it is."

Slowly he drew up the imprisoned foot out of the water. At the first glance Peter knew what had happened. Some one had set a steel trap for Billy Mink and then

forgotten to take it up when the trapping season ended. The young Heron had stepped in it and now was held fast by the cruel jaws.

CHAPTER XIII

PETER EXPLAINS ABOUT THE TRAP

A wrong to others is not mended
By saying it was not intended.

Longlegs.

When Peter Rabbit saw the trap clinging to the foot of the young Heron, he promptly forgot all his anger toward Longlegs, the father of the young Heron. He was filled with great pity, for Peter knew something about traps and what a dreadful thing it is to be caught in one.

"Wha — what is it?" asked the young Heron.

"It is a trap," replied Peter

promptly, and for once he forgot to be glad that he knew something that some one else did n't know.

"Wha — wha — what is a trap?" asked the young Heron. "Wi — will it eat me?"

Had it not been for the fear that shook the voice and shone in the eyes of the young Heron, I suspect Peter would have laughed at that. But he did n't laugh. No, sir, he did n't even smile.

"That trap is n't alive," said he.

"It is too!" retorted the young Heron sharply. "It jumped up out of the mud and grabbed me by the foot and won't let go. Of course it is alive."

Peter shook his head. "No,"

said he, "it is n't alive. It is a thing put there by one of those two-legged creatures called men. Do you know them when you see them?"

The young Heron nodded. "My mother has pointed one of them out to me and warned me to keep away from them. She says they are the most dreadful and dangerous creatures in all the Great World and that they can kill us when still far from us. I don't understand that, but my mother says it is true."

"Your mother is right," replied Peter. "I know, for they have hunted me more than once. They are strange creatures. Some of them are all right and not to be

feared, but many of them do dreadful things and seem to have no pity for us people of the Green Meadows and the Green Forest. Those are the ones who set traps. A trap is one of those things clinging to your foot. It is made by man and then hidden where some one will step in it and be caught, just as you are. Then a man comes and kills whoever is in the trap if they are not dead already. He does n't seem to think of the suffering of the one caught, or else he is so hard-hearted he does n't care. But I have never known of any traps at this time of year. Usually they are set late in the fall, after the birds have gone to the Sunny South, and taken away

before the birds return in the spring. I never heard of setting one for a bird, anyway." Peter wrinkled his forehead as he puzzled over this.

At length his face cleared. "I have it," said he. "Some one set that trap last spring for Billy Mink and then forgot all about it. It was n't meant for you at all. You just happened to step in it. My, this is dreadful! The owner of that trap is n't likely to come around at all."

"I should hope not!" exclaimed the young Heron. "I should die of fright if I saw one of those dreadful two-legged creatures coming."

"You 'll die anyway, if one of them does n't find you," declared

Peter. "No one but one of them can possibly set you free, and they are not all dreadful. If Farmer Brown's Boy could know of this he would set you free."

"Who is Farmer Brown's Boy?" asked the young Heron suspiciously.

"One of those same two-legged creatures, but the best friend in all the Great World," declared Peter.

"Is this his trap?" asked the young Heron.

Peter shook his head very hard. "No, sir!" he declared. "Farmer Brown's Boy doesn't set traps, and he won't let anybody else set them about here if he knows of it. Farmer Brown's Boy isn't that kind."

CHAPTER XIV

PETER STANDS BY

A friend stands by through thick and thin,
And holds desertion as a sin.

Longlegs.

The Black Shadows were fast creeping through the swamp where the young Heron was held fast in a cruel steel trap. Mrs. Longlegs, the mother of the young Heron, returned with a Frog for him, and then settled herself for the night close by. There was nothing more that she could do.

At her approach Peter Rabbit had slipped back out of sight among the big ferns, and from his hiding

place watched until it was so dark that he could no longer see the poor young Heron and his mother. He knew that there was nothing he could do, still he could n't bear to leave them there alone.

"There can't anything happen to that young Heron in the night," Peter said to himself. And then he thought of Billy Mink. Supposing Billy should happen along that way! Peter knew that Billy would like nothing better than a meal of young Heron.

"Mrs. Longlegs will be more than a match for Billy Mink," thought Peter, and felt better.

Then he thought of Reddy Fox. Supposing Reddy should come prowling along there in the night,

or supposing Old Man Coyote should happen that way. Peter shivered at the thought. Mrs. Longlegs might be very brave, but either of those hunters was so big and so crafty that as likely as not Mrs. Longlegs herself would be killed. Peter was worried.

"Well, if they come, there is nothing I can do," he muttered. "I'm sorry for the young Heron. I wish I could do something for him. But I can't. I'm just wasting time hanging around here. It won't do anybody any good for me to stay. I think I'll go back to the dear Old Briar-patch. Then I'll run over here to-morrow and see what has happened."

So Peter started to go back

along the Laughing Brook to the Smiling Pool, intending to scamper across from there to the dear Old Briar-patch. When he came out of the swamp he looked up. The kindly stars were twinkling down at him. They would keep watch all the long night.

Peter started off, lipperty-lipperty-lip. But he had gone only a short way when he stopped. He sat up and stared back at the swamp where the young Heron was in such dreadful trouble. It was simply a great black mass in the starlight. Peter started on again, stopped, started once more, and once more stopped. Then what do you think he did? He turned about and once more started, only this time

he was headed straight back to that swamp.

"It is silly of me. It is very silly of me," said he, over and over to himself. "I can't help any. No use of my going back there. I can't fight. Most likely I'll just get into trouble myself. Better mind my own business and leave that of others alone. Nobody will thank me. Don't know what I'm going back for. It's just because I'm a silly Rabbit, I guess."

And all the time Peter kept right on back toward the swamp and the place where the young Heron was held in the cruel steel trap. Down in his heart he did know what he was going back for. He was going back because he could n't

and struggled with that terrible trap until he was quite used up. His mother, Mrs. Longlegs, had gone over to the Big River to try to catch a nice plump Frog for his breakfast. Peter had just made up his mind that it was foolish of him to waste his time by staying there when there was nothing he could do. He was all ready to say good-by to the young Heron and hurry back to the dear Old Briar-patch, when he caught a glimpse of something red moving farther back in the swamp.

He did n't have to look twice to know that that was the red coat of Reddy Fox. Very carefully Peter sat up straight that he might see better. Reddy was trotting

along, sniffing from side to side, now running a bit this way and now that way. Reddy was hunting. Peter had been hunted too often by him to make any mistake on that.

Peter's first thought was that Reddy was hunting for him. Then he remembered that Reddy did n't know he was over there in the swamp. He was just hunting for anybody or anything he could find. Then right on the heels of that came the thought of the young Heron held fast in the trap. Could it be that Reddy had heard about it? A sharp look at Reddy decided Peter that Reddy had n't heard about the young Heron.

"He has just happened over

here in the swamp this morning," thought Peter. "There is n't anybody in particular on his mind. Oh, dear, what did he have to come here just now for? Why could n't he have gone somewhere else this morning? He is heading right over this way now, and if he keeps on he will be sure to find that young Heron. Mrs. Longlegs has gone fishing and there is n't anybody to do a thing. Oh, dear! Oh, dear! If only I could do something!"

Then all in a flash an idea came to him. If Reddy should discover him, it might be that he could lead Reddy away from that part of the swamp! Peter thought hard and fast. He was trying to think of

a place of safety should Reddy chase him. At last he thought of a certain old log that was partly hollow with an opening at one end just big enough for him to get through but too small for Reddy to get his head into. It lay over on the other side of the swamp. Could he get there before Reddy could catch him? He would have to run his very best to do it. And he might not be able to do it even then.

It was a great risk. If he sat still where he was hidden under the ferns the chances were that Reddy would not find him at all. He would find the helpless young Heron and then he would have no thought for anybody else. Why should he, Peter, risk his life for

one who probably would n't even thank him. The fact is, he probably would n't even know what Peter had done.

"Shame," said something inside Peter. "Shame on you." Peter slipped swiftly away under the ferns and headed so as to cross right in front of Reddy Fox. And as he ran, it came to him that he was going to help, after all, and he was glad.

CHAPTER XVI

PETER JUST MAKES IT

Who does his best will do his all
And be content whate'er befall.

Longlegs.

Reddy Fox was hunting in the swamp down by the Big River. Once in so often Reddy visited that swamp. Occasionally he got a good meal down there. He had come down there early this morning because he happened to be near by and thought he might as well see what was to be seen. Reddy is one of those who believes in being thorough. He has learned that often the best things

are found where least expected. He would n't be disappointed if he found nothing, and he would have the satisfaction of knowing that he had n't missed something.

So he trotted along through the swamp with eyes and ears and nose all at work. He examined every old stump and poked his nose into every clump of ferns along the way, just as if he were very hungry, which he was n't at all, for these warm days there were plenty of grasshoppers and he could get a stomach full any time.

Suddenly across a little open space ahead of him a brown form darted, lipperty-lipperty-lip. Reddy saw it instantly. To say

that he was surprised would be putting it mildly.

"Peter Rabbit, as I live!" exclaimed Reddy. "Now what is that scamp doing way down here?"

But he did n't allow his surprise to cause him to waste any time. With a leap he was after Peter, and he could n't help grinning as he ran. "This is the time I will catch him," thought Reddy.

"There are no bramble tangles in here for Peter to creep into, and I don't know of a single hole that I can't dig him out of, and I know every hole in this swamp. You made a mistake, Peter, when you came down here. You certainly did. I 've eaten grasshoppers for a week and a Rabbit

certainly will taste good." Reddy smacked his lips as he ran.

Now Peter can run very fast for a short distance, but Reddy can run very fast for a long distance. Peter knew that for a while he could dodge Reddy in and around those clumps of big ferns, but he also knew that sooner or later Reddy would catch him at that game. There was just one place of safety for him, that old hollow log on the farther side of the swamp, and to get there he could waste no time and strength dodging. It must be a straightaway race and he would need all his speed and strength to get there before Reddy could catch him.

So Peter ran straight for that old log, and he ran just as fast as he could make his legs go. After a few minutes Reddy was puzzled. "He runs as if he were going straight for some particular place," muttered Reddy, who had expected Peter to twist and dodge in his usual manner. "There is n't any hole in this direction. I wonder if he thinks he can outrun me. I 'll show him!"

Reddy ran a little faster and soon saw that he was gaining on Peter. Peter, looking over his shoulder, saw it too, and did his best to make his leaps a little longer. But he could n't. He was running as fast as he could, and it was clear to him that

Reddy was coming much faster. Would he be able to reach that old log in time? Would he? Somehow it seemed farther, much farther than he had thought when he started. His legs were beginning to ache. His breath was getting short. For just a wee second he wished he had left the young Heron caught in a trap back there by the Laughing Brook to his fate. Then he was ashamed of himself and put that thought out of his head.

Ah, there was that old log just ahead! Peter glanced back. It seemed as if he looked right into the mouth of Reddy Fox. It frightened him so that he made two or three extra long jumps

and then — well, then he just made it. He was safe, but it was one of the narrowest escapes in all his life.

CHAPTER XVII

REDDY FOX TRIES AN OLD TRICK

Beware of tricky people; they
Cannot be trusted night or day.

Longlegs.

REDDY FOX was angry. He was angry clear through. Yes, sir, he was, for a fact. You see he had been sure, just as sure as that he was alive, that he would catch Peter Rabbit, and Peter had escaped. Peter had reached that old hollow log on the edge of the swamp just in the very nick of time. Reddy had forgotten all about that hollow log. Had he remembered it, he might have run

just a wee bit faster and that would have been enough to have caught Peter. You see, Reddy knew that Peter had been running just as fast as he possibly could.

So this is what made Reddy angry. He was n't angry with Peter; he was angry with himself. He had been sure that there was n't a single place of safety anywhere in that swamp for Peter, and so he had felt that Peter was just as good as caught. And now Peter was safe, and all because he, Reddy, had forgotten that old log. Reddy ground his teeth in his anger, but he took care to do it so that Peter should n't hear him.

He poked his sharp nose in the hole through which Peter had

escaped, but his nose was about all he could get in. His head was too big.

"Peter," said Reddy, "you are a great runner." Reddy's voice was smooth and pleasant. To have heard him you never would have guessed how disappointed he was and how angry inside.

"Yes, indeed, Peter, you are a great runner. You surprised me. You did indeed. I believe you could beat me in a race. You did this time, and I believe you could do it again. What do you say to trying another race when you have got your breath? To beat me twice would be something to boast about in the Green Forest and on the Green Meadows. I tell you

what, Peter, I'll give you just the same start of me you had before. You beat me this time. If you do it again, I'll tell everybody that you are a better runner than I. What do you say?"

Now Reddy had said all this in the friendliest voice imaginable. Peter, inside the hollow log, panting for breath, grinned.

"He must think I have grown simple-minded if he has the least idea that he can get me out with any such talk as that," thought Peter.

Aloud he said, "No, thank you, Reddy. I'm satisfied to have won one race and it will take me the rest of the morning to get my breath. Just tell the folks that I

beat you this time. Some other day perhaps I will do it again."

Reddy drew back his lips in an ugly snarl, but he turned his head so that Peter could n't see.

"Just as you say, Peter," said he, and his voice was smooth and friendly. "It is late and I must be getting back to the Old Pasture. So long, Peter, until next time. I promised Mrs. Reddy that I would be back early and I must hurry."

With this Reddy turned and trotted away toward the Green Meadows which he would have to cross to reach the Old Pasture. Peter crept to the opening in the end of the old log to watch him. He could see Reddy for quite a distance and not once did Reddy

look back. He trotted straight along as if he had no thought of anything but getting home, as he had said. Finally he disappeared behind some tall ferns on the very edge of the swamp.

Once behind those ferns Reddy ran swiftly, but not toward the Old Pasture. Instead, he made a wide circle so as to come in back of that old log. As he approached it he moved as cautiously as only a Fox can. Finally he crept almost on his stomach until he reached a hiding-place among some ferns from which he could watch that old log. Then he laid down, grinning wickedly. He was trying an old trick that had caught him many a dinner.

CHAPTER XVIII

A TEST OF PATIENCE

Impatience loses; patience wins.
It sticks to what it once begins.

Longlegs.

Reddy Fox felt very smart as he lay in a clump of ferns back of the old log in which Peter Rabbit had found safety.

"Peter Rabbit thinks I have gone to the Old Pasture. I did n't look behind me once, for I did n't want to arouse his suspicions, but I know just as well as if I had that he watched me out of sight," thought Reddy. Then he grinned. It was a crafty, sly, wicked grin.

"That old log is open at only one end so Peter can see only in one direction without coming out," continued Reddy to himself. "He'll wait a while, then come out. He'll wait until he is sure that I have had plenty of time to reach the Old Pasture; then out he will come or I don't know Peter Rabbit. I am afraid Peter's next race with me won't have so happy an ending — for him. But for me —"

Reddy didn't finish; he licked his lips as if he already tasted that Rabbit dinner.

So Reddy lay hidden in a clump of ferns behind the old log and was very comfortable and his thoughts were very pleasant. It didn't

enter his clever head that there could be a doubt about that Rabbit dinner. It was merely a matter of being patient. He could afford to be patient. Such a dinner was worth being patient for.

Meanwhile, inside that hollow old log, Peter Rabbit was resting and also doing some thinking. Reddy Fox would have been surprised could he have known Peter's thoughts. He would indeed. And he would n't have been quite so sure of that dinner.

"Reddy trotted off quite as if he were going just where he said, back to the Old Pasture," thought Peter. "He was altogether too friendly in his talk and he left too soon and in too much

of a hurry. While he was in sight he did n't once look back. He all but caught me that time and the red-coated sinner is n't one to take a disappointment so pleasantly unless he has another plan. I know him. I ought to by this time, and I do.

"He wants me to think that he has gone straight back to the Old Pasture. If that is what he wants me to think, the thing for me to do is to think exactly the opposite. Of course I don't know where he is, but I can guess, and my guess is that he is somewhere close by where I can't see him from the open end of this old log. I wish there was a hole at the other end. I do so. Well, I can tell him one thing,

and that is that if he waits for me to come out he'll have a long wait. I need a good sleep anyway, and this is the time to get it."

So Peter made himself comfortable and went to sleep. Reddy Fox wanted to take a nap, for he had been out all night, but he was afraid that if he did Peter might slip out and away and he know nothing about it. Had he known that Peter was taking a nap he would have taken one. But he didn't know it and so he kept his eyes open, watching that old log.

Jolly, round, bright Mr. Sun crept higher and higher in the blue, blue sky and the heat grew and grew until even down there in the swamp under the ferns and trees it

became hard to bear. Reddy began to pant. He wished he was back in his home deep in the ground in the Old Pasture. It was always cool in there. Mosquitoes and flies tormented him. But a Rabbit dinner would be worth all this and so he was patient.

Meanwhile Peter Rabbit had a good nap. When he awoke he peeped out. Everything seemed safe. But Peter knew that very often things are not as they seem. "If it is a matter of saving my life, I can afford to be patient," thought he. "I have got to know that Reddy Fox has gone before I venture out." So Peter settled himself for another nap.

CHAPTER XIX

PETER FINDS A PEEPHOLE

Don't let impatience lead you to
Take chances as the foolish do.

Longlegs.

THERE was this difference between Reddy Fox hiding in a clump of ferns behind the old hollow log, and Peter Rabbit hiding inside that same old hollow log: Reddy was sure that Peter was inside that log, and Peter was n't sure Reddy was watching for him to come out. He suspected it, but he did n't absolutely know it.

"I feel it in my bones that he

is somewhere around," thought Peter. "He knows that I am a long way from the dear Old Briar-patch and he will do his best to see that I don't get back there. But why worry? There is no use in worrying. Worrying is the worst habit I know of. I'm safe now and as long as I stay in this old log I will be safe. That is enough. It will be time enough to worry when I leave, and that won't be soon. Of course, it may be that Reddy did go straight home to the Old Pasture. But I don't believe it. I know that old sinner too well.

"Anyway, if he is waiting and watching for me, he is kept away from the Laughing Brook where

that poor young Heron is caught in that cruel trap. This is a funny old world. It certainly is. I thought I could n't do anything to help that poor young Heron and I guess that already I have saved his life. Reddy Fox surely would have found him had I not got him to chase me and so led him away. And that young Heron does n't know it and never will know it. I wonder if others have done things for me and I have n't known it. It certainly is a funny old world. Nobody, no matter how hard he tries, can live all to himself. It simply can't be done.

"Whoever set that cruel trap and then forgot it probably set it for Billy Mink. Yet because

of it that poor young Heron is suffering pain and fright and may die, his mother is worrying, I have had to run for my life, and now I don't dare go outside this hollow log, Mrs. Peter is worrying because I don't come home to the dear Old Briar-patch, and Reddy Fox is disappointed in a dinner I guess he was sure of. Yes, sir, it is a funny old world."

Peter stopped thinking about the funny old world to wriggle that wobbly little nose of his. A Merry Little Breeze had just wandered past and had brought just the faintest of smells. Peter grinned. "Reddy is somewhere near, just as I thought," said he to himself. "I can smell him.

It is a good thing for some of us that Reddy gives off such a strong smell. That Merry Little Breeze did me a great favor and does n't know it. There you are again, somebody doing something for somebody else without knowing it. It is just as I said before, a funny old world. I wish I knew just where Reddy is."

Peter began to examine the inside of that old log. It was open at only one end, so of course that was the only direction in which Peter could see out. But presently, way back near the farther end, Peter discovered a tiny ray of light. That meant that there was a tiny hole there. He scratched at the soft, rotted wood

where that tiny ray of light came in, and it crumbled away. The tiny ray grew larger. Peter kept scratching. Presently he had uncovered a little knot hole. It was little, but he could peep out of it.

Peter could n't see much out of that little hole. In fact, about all he could see was a clump of ferns a little way off. For a while he sat idly peeping out, while his thoughts were busy about the funny old world and the way people's lives are all mixed together. Suddenly those ferns moved ever so little and a sharp nose was thrust out. Peter almost laughed right out. He knew now just where Reddy Fox was.

CHAPTER XX

SAMMY JAY COMES ALONG

Hold your tongue and use your eyes
And you 'll learn much that will surprise.

Longlegs.

Sammy Jay had n't anything in particular to do save to look about for mischief. You know Sammy dearly loves to get into mischief. His children had grown and left the nest to look out for themselves, and Sammy had no home duties. So he spent his time, when not looking for something to eat, in looking for mischief.

Just what prompted him to fly over to the swamp on the edge of the Big River that morning nobody

knows. Perhaps he happened to think that he had n't visited the swamp for a long time. Anyway, he flew over there, and it happened that because he flew there from the Old Orchard he entered it at the edge near where lay the hollow log in which Peter Rabbit was hiding from Reddy Fox.

Now when Sammy Jay is looking for mischief he always is very quiet. At other times he is very noisy. He dearly loves to hear the sound of his own voice. But people looking for mischief never want to be seen or heard. So Sammy has a way of snooping around silently, using those sharp eyes of his for all they are worth. And you may be sure there is little they miss.

Sammy flitted from tree to tree, stopping in each to peer this way and look that way to see all that was to be seen, and so it was that presently he came to a tree just above a big clump of tall ferns. As usual, Sammy peered this way and looked that way and so it was that he looked right down into that clump of tall ferns. They moved ever so little.

Now there was n't a breath of air moving and ferns do not move of themselves. Sammy knew that. Of course.

"Some one is down among those ferns," thought Sammy, and leaned over to see better.

As I said before, Sammy's eyes are very sharp. Almost at once he

saw something red. He changed his position so as to see better. Then he chuckled to himself. "That is Reddy Fox hiding there," he muttered. "I wonder what that scamp is there for. He must be watching for some one."

Sammy looked all about to try to see who Reddy was waiting for, but no one was to be seen. A little way off lay an old log, but from where he sat Sammy could n't see that one end was open or he would have guessed that the one Reddy was waiting for was in that old log. For some time Sammy sat there watching. Nothing happened and at last Sammy grew tired.

There is nothing Sammy Jay delights in more than in upsetting

the plans of Reddy Fox. He knew by the way Reddy kept so still that he hoped to catch some one. Sammy's eyes sparkled with mischief and he opened his mouth.

"Thief! Thief! Thief!" he screamed at the top of his lungs. "Fox! Fox! Thief! Thief!"

Reddy looked up and snarled. Then he slowly got to his feet. He knew that it was useless to hide there longer.

"Why don't you mind your own business and let others attend to theirs?" he snapped.

"Thief! Thief! Here is Reddy Fox!" screamed Sammy in great glee.

Reddy glared up at Sammy and if looks could kill Sammy would

have fallen dead right that instant. As it was, he only screamed the louder. Reddy turned and with as much dignity as he could trotted away. Sammy followed, all the time screaming, "Thief! Here is Reddy Fox! Thief! Thief!"

Out of the swamp and halfway across the Green Meadows Sammy followed Reddy Fox, and every one within hearing knew just where Reddy was. Peter Rabbit in the hollow log heard and chuckled, for he knew that now there was no longer danger from Reddy. He yawned, crept out of the hollow log and stretched. Then he thought of that poor young Heron in a trap and as he did so an idea came to him.

CHAPTER XXI

PETER CONSULTS SAMMY JAY

When all is said and all is done
You 'll find there 's good in every one.
Longlegs.

"I DO believe Sammy Jay can help, if only he will," thought Peter. "He 'll come back here. He 'll follow Reddy until he sees that Reddy is really going to his home in the Old Pasture, then he 'll come back here to try to find out why Reddy was waiting here. I know him. They can talk about my curiosity, but I have n't a bit more than Sammy Jay. All I need to do is to be patient a

while longer and Sammy will show up as sure as my tail is short."

So Peter sat down near the old log in which he had escaped from Reddy Fox and waited. He did n't have to wait long. As silently as he had entered the swamp the first time Sammy Jay returned. He saw Peter at once, and he guessed right away that it was Peter that Reddy Fox had been waiting for.

"Hello, Peter!" said he. "Where were you when I drove Reddy Fox away?"

"In that old log," replied Peter, looking at it. "You did me a good turn that time, and I 'm much obliged to you. I wonder

if you would like to do some one else a good turn."

Sammy cocked his head to one side and looked at Peter shrewdly. "That depends on who it is," said he.

"It is some one in great trouble," replied Peter. "I know you dearly love to make trouble for other people, but I also know that you are not so bad as some people like to say you are."

"Thank you," replied Sammy Jay.

"I haven't forgotten how you helped Mrs. Quack when she was in trouble," continued Peter. "I know of some one else who is in even worse trouble, and it is one of the feathered folk too."

"Who is it?" demanded Sammy, looking very much interested.

"That's telling," retorted Peter. "I won't tell until you promise that if you won't help you at least won't tell anybody else about it."

"I'll promise that," replied Sammy promptly. He was growing more and more curious.

"And will you help if you can?" asked Peter.

Sammy thought it over for a few minutes. Finally he agreed that he would help if he could. Then Peter told him all about the poor young Heron caught by one foot in a cruel steel trap. "I don't think he has much chance," said he. "If Farmer Brown's Boy

should find him, it would be all right. The thing is to get Farmer Brown's Boy to find him before Reddy Fox or Old Man Coyote finds him. You are the only one I can think of who can get Farmer Brown's Boy over there, unless it is your cousin, Blacky the Crow; and somehow I would rather trust you."

"Thank you again," replied Sammy Jay gravely, though there was a twinkle in his eyes. "You are getting to be a flatterer. Now just how do you think I can get Farmer Brown's Boy over there?"

"By keeping watch until you see Farmer Brown's Boy somewhere about and then screaming with all your might. He 'll be sure to

come over to see what you have found. You know he always does."

Sammy nodded. "But supposing," said he, "that Farmer Brown's Boy doesn't come where he can hear me?"

"Then there is nothing you can do, or any one else, for that matter," replied Peter, looking very anxious.

"All right," replied Sammy. "I'm off to see that young Heron and then to watch for Farmer Brown's Boy." And as silently as he had come, Sammy flew away.

CHAPTER XXII

SAMMY JAY IS TRUE TO HIS WORD

Who to his spoken word is true
Respect will have whate'er he do.

Longlegs.

Sammy Jay flew straight over to where Peter Rabbit had said he would find the poor young Heron fast in a trap on the edge of the Laughing Brook. Sammy made no sound. He believes in seeing all that can be seen before being seen himself. It did n't take him a minute to see that things were just as Peter had told him. He knew that Peter was right; that none of the forest or

meadow people could possibly get that cruel trap off that young Heron's foot.

"Farmer Brown's Boy is his only chance for life," thought Sammy. "Peter is right about that. The poor thing! The poor thing! That trap must hurt dreadfully. Whoever set it ought to be caught in it just to learn what it is like. Well, Sammy Jay, it looks as if you are the only one who can do anything to get that youngster out of his trouble, and the sooner you go about it the better."

So Sammy spread his blue wings and flew away without being seen by the young Heron or his mother, Mrs. Longlegs.

He had decided that it would be best not to show himself. "It might add to their worries," muttered Sammy, which was very thoughtful of him. "I haven't the best name ever was, and they might think I would tell of their trouble to Reddy Fox or Old Man Coyote."

Sammy grinned at the thought of his bad name, but didn't seem at all disturbed about it.

When he reached the edge of the swamp nearest the Green Meadows he stopped in the top of the tallest tree and eagerly looked across to Farmer Brown's cornfield. Now, as you know, Sammy Jay's eyes are very, very sharp and it didn't take him two

minutes to make sure that no one was in that cornfield. He was disappointed, very much disappointed. "Farmer Brown's Boy was at work there yesterday," thought he. "He worked there all day. I wonder if he is all through there. If he is, there won't be much hope for that poor young Heron. Oh, dear, this is too bad. It certainly is too bad."

Then he remembered that it was still early in the day. Perhaps if he were patient, Farmer Brown's Boy would come a little later. So Sammy hunted about for something to eat and then perched in the top of the tree to watch and wait and be as patient

as he could be. Sammy can be as patient as anybody in all the Green Forest or on all the Green Meadows when he is trying to find out something that he is interested in. But to sit waiting for some one, not knowing whether or not they will come, is the hardest test of patience of which I know.

Sammy found it so. He fidgeted and fidgeted. A dozen times he was on the edge of giving up and leaving that poor young Heron to his fate. Then he would think how terrible it was to be caught in a trap and would try to be patient. But at last it grew so late in the morning that Sammy made up his mind that Farmer

Brown's Boy was n't coming down to the cornfield that day.

"It is of no use to wait any longer," thought Sammy. "He is n't coming and I am wasting my time for nothing. I may just as well give up now as later."

And just then he spied some one coming down the Long Lane toward the Green Meadows. One good look was enough; it was Farmer Brown's Boy. Sammy's bright eyes sparkled. He kept quiet and watched. Farmer Brown's Boy did n't stop at the cornfield. He came right on past the cornfield and headed toward the Smiling Pool. In his hand he carried a fishing rod. He was going fishing.

"It could n't be better,"

thought Sammy. "No, sir, it could n't be better. I will get him over here now, or my name is n't Sammy Jay."

CHAPTER XXIII

FARMER BROWN'S BOY STOPS

Keep at what e'er you once begin;
It is the only way to win.

Longlegs.

FARMER BROWN'S Boy whistled merrily as he tramped across the Green Meadows on his way to the Smiling Pool. That whistle was good to hear. Danny Meadow Mouse, scurrying along one of his private little paths through the grass, paused to listen. Sitting there, listening all by himself, he grinned.

"He sounds happy," muttered Danny. "I hope he is happy.

He never forgets to leave some crumbs for me when he has his lunch down here on the Green Meadows. I wish all those two-legged creatures were like him. But most of them are terrible." Danny sighed. Then he scurried on along his private little path.

Johnny Chuck sat up on his doorstep to watch Farmer Brown's Boy. Johnny's face was all wrinkles, for Johnny was grinning too as he watched and listened. At his feet lay a handful of tender lettuce leaves. They had not been there when Farmer Brown's Boy came down the Long Lane. But now that he had passed they were there and Johnny knew who had left them.

JOHNNY CHUCK SAT UP ON HIS DOOR STEP TO WATCH FARMER BROWN'S BOY.

"My, my, my, would n't this be a great old world if all the people in it were like Farmer Brown's Boy," thought Johnny Chuck. Then as the cornfield shut off his view of Farmer Brown's Boy, he contentedly settled down to enjoy that feast of lettuce.

Every one, or nearly every one, within hearing of that merry whistle had very much such thoughts as those of Danny Meadow Mouse and Johnny Chuck. As for Farmer Brown's Boy, he whistled more merrily than ever as he drew near the Smiling Pool. He was going fishing. It was a long time since he had been fishing. He had been working hard, very hard, in the cornfield and at the haying and in

the garden. It had been long since he had had a day to himself in which to do just what he wanted to do. Now he had one and he was going fishing, first at the Smiling Pool and then down at the Big River, and if there is one thing Farmer Brown's Boy loves to do it is to go fishing.

As he whistled he was dreaming. Of course, those dreams were day-dreams, and they were very pleasant dreams. They were of the big fish he hoped to catch. All fishermen have these dreams. Suddenly into the midst of them broke the harsh voice of Sammy Jay. Over in the swamp some distance away Sammy was making a terrible fuss about something.

At first Farmer Brown's Boy paid no heed. He kept right on toward the Smiling Pool. Sammy Jay saw this and redoubled his screams. He did his best to make them sound as if he were terribly excited about something. He knew that if Farmer Brown's Boy once got to fishing, it would probably be more than he could do to induce him to leave. Still Farmer Brown's Boy tramped on toward the Smiling Pool. Sammy screamed until his throat ached.

"Sammy Jay is making a great fuss over something. Don't know as I ever heard him so excited before," said Farmer Brown's Boy, talking to himself. "I'd like to know what has stirred the scamp

up so. Probably he has found Reddy Fox over there and is trying to spoil his hunting. Goodness, what a racket he is making! If it wasn't that I want to get to fishing, I would run over there to see what it is all about. It is something unusual, that's sure. Sammy never makes such a fuss as that over nothing."

Farmer Brown's Boy stopped and looked toward the swamp. Sammy saw him stop and at once screamed harder than ever. Anyway he tried to. He had made Farmer Brown's Boy stop. Would he be able to make him come over to the swamp?

CHAPTER XXIV

SAMMY JAY'S SUCCESS

Few there are who can resist
Those who patiently persist.

Longlegs.

Slowly Farmer Brown's Boy began to walk toward the swamp where Sammy Jay was screaming as if trying to scream his head off. Presently he put down his fishing rod and began to hurry. As he drew near the swamp, Sammy Jay flew a bit farther in, all the time keeping up his screaming. It was as if he were following some one. Farmer Brown's Boy thought he

was. Each time he got near Sammy moved on.

By this time Farmer Brown's Boy had quite forgotten that he wanted to go fishing. He wanted now more than anything else to know what Sammy Jay was making such a fuss about, and he meant to find out. As he entered the swamp he moved slowly and carefully, so as to make no noise. He knew that if Sammy was watching one of his neighbors, Reddy Fox for instance, the only way to find out who it was would be to keep unseen and unheard himself. So Farmer Brown's Boy stole through the swamp as quietly as he could and this was very quietly indeed, for he had learned much from his

little neighbors of the Green Forest and Green Meadows about how to see without being seen.

By this time, others had begun to wonder what Sammy was making such a racket for. Blacky the Crow, who is Sammy's big cousin, was on his way from the Green Forest to find out what was going on. Old Man Coyote had awakened from a nap and was wondering whether it would be worth while to run over to the swamp. Old Granny Fox had already started. And many of the feathered folk were flying as fast as they could toward the swamp.

Sammy knew this. It was always so when he made a racket like this. But as long as Farmer

Brown's Boy continued to come, he did n't care about the others. He was the only one who mattered now. The trees were thick and Sammy could not see far among them. Once he stopped screaming and silently flew back to make sure that Farmer Brown's Boy had n't given up. Farmer Brown's Boy was standing still, listening. Sammy hurriedly flew back and began to scream again.

Gradually Sammy drew nearer and nearer to where the young Heron was held fast in that dreadful trap which some one had set and then forgotten. His mother, Mrs. Longlegs, was with him. Of course she heard Sammy. She would have had to be deaf not to

have heard him. At first, when he was in the distance, she paid no attention to him. But as he drew nearer and nearer, she began to grow anxious. What could it mean? If Sammy kept on, he would come straight to where they were. Did it mean that Reddy Fox or some other enemy was stealing through the swamp and Sammy was following, trying to spoil their hunting, as he so often did? Mrs. Longlegs was prepared to fight to save that young Heron, even though it might cost her own life.

Then Sammy Jay appeared. He perched in a tree just above them and screamed harder than ever. He screamed as fast as his

tongue could go. Mrs. Longlegs glared up at him angrily. She began to suspect that Sammy had discovered the trouble that young Heron was in and was bringing an enemy there.

"It is all right. It is all right," Sammy cried to her. "Help is coming."

Then a twig snapped and the quick, keen eyes of Mrs. Longlegs caught a glimpse of a form moving among the trees. Her heart sank. It was one of those terrible two-legged creatures called men. It was useless to try to fight him. Even the courage of her brave mother-heart was not equal to facing such an enemy. With a heart-broken scream she spread her

broad wings and flew away just as Farmer Brown's Boy stepped out on the edge of the Laughing Brook close to the young Heron. Sammy Jay stopped screaming. He had been successful. Now he was eager to see what would happen.

CHAPTER XXV

MRS. LONGLEGS LOSES ALL HOPE

When hope departs comes grim despair,
And sorrow seems too great to bear.

Longlegs.

Mrs. Longlegs flew but a short distance when Farmer Brown's Boy appeared so unexpectedly, — just far enough to feel safe. She perched in a tree where she could see all that happened. She felt that she must know what was to become of that young son of hers who was fast in a cruel trap. She had n't the smallest doubt that he would be killed. Her experience with these two-legged creatures like the one now standing looking

at the poor young Heron had been most unpleasant. She had seen many a fine young Duck drop lifeless when one of these creatures had pointed a stick from which sprang fire and smoke. More than once she had had one pointed at her, and had felt sharp pains that had made her ill for days afterward. She hated and feared all these two-legged creatures. And when Sammy Jay said that now everything would be all right, she did n't believe a word of it.

She saw Farmer Brown's Boy stop and she saw the surprised look on his face as he discovered the young Heron. The truth is, Farmer Brown's Boy *was* surprised. He saw at a glance that the young

Heron was practically full grown, and he could n't understand why it had n't flown when Mrs. Longlegs flew.

He took a step forward. The young Heron spread his broad wings and flapped helplessly in an effort to fly. It ended by his falling flat. Instantly Farmer Brown's Boy understood that the young Heron was caught by one foot, and the look of surprise gave way to one of pity.

The young Heron scrambled up and made ready to defend himself. It was quite clear that he intended to fight for his life.

"Stop it, you silly fellow!" cried Sammy Jay. "Farmer Brown's Boy is going to help, not hurt you."

But the young Heron paid no attention. This was one of those terrible two-legged creatures his mother had told him about, worse than Reddy Fox or Old Man Coyote or any other enemy. He was filled with dreadful fear, but he intended to do his best against this enemy. He was no coward.

Farmer Brown's Boy looked at the long, spearlike bill of the young Heron and shook his head. He knew that that bill could be driven with great force by that long neck, and he had no mind to lose an eye. He had heard somewhere that a Heron would strike at the eyes. It might or might not be true, but he did n't intend to take any chances.

He took off his old coat, which for a wonder he had with him that morning. He held it in front of him and moved toward the young Heron. The Heron struck once. That was all, just once. Somehow that coat had covered his head so that he was helpless. Then Farmer Brown's Boy had gathered him, coat and all, under one arm and was looking to see what held his foot.

When he saw that rusty old trap a black scowl darkened the face of Farmer Brown's Boy. "I wish," said he, "that the one who set this was caught in it instead of this poor bird."

Then very carefully, being as gentle as he could, he released the trap and looked at the injured foot.

"That foot has got to be taken care of," said he decidedly. Then with the young Heron still wrapped in his coat in such a way that he could breathe but could n't struggle, he started for home. With a despairing cry Mrs. Longlegs flew over to the Big River. She had lost all hope because she did n't understand. But Sammy Jay and Peter Rabbit and Blacky the Crow, who had seen it all, understood and were glad.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE YOUNG HERON LEARNS MANY THINGS

Blessed is the tender heart
That makes of sympathy an art.

Longlegs.

PETER RABBIT and Sammy Jay were happy, happier than they had been for a long time, as they watched Farmer Brown's Boy tramp across the Green Meadows toward home, carrying the young Heron wrapped in his coat.

"It is all right now!" cried Peter. "I knew Farmer Brown's Boy would get him out of that dreadful trap. You ought to feel

good all over, Sammy Jay, to think that you succeeded in saving that young Heron's life. But for you, he would have lost it sooner or later. No one but you could have brought Farmer Brown's Boy over to this swamp. That Heron ought to be thankful to you all his life."

"And to you too, Peter," replied Sammy Jay. "But for you I would n't have known about him. Then, too, you led Reddy Fox away from him. I guess he owes as much to you as to me. I wonder what Farmer Brown's Boy will do with him. I think I will fly up to Farmer Brown's dooryard and see what happens."

Rather wistfully Peter watched Sammy Jay fly away. Then he

turned to see if the way was clear back to the dear Old Briar-patch. Farmer Brown's Boy was trudging across the Green Meadows, and Peter decided that this was the safest time possible for him to get home. So away he went for the dear old Briar-patch, lipperty-lipperty-lip, as fast as he could, to tell little Mrs. Peter all about the things that had happened down in the swamp by the Big River.

Meanwhile the poor young Heron was shaking all over from fright. He was held fast by one of the giants he had been taught were his most dangerous and dreadful enemies and was being taken he knew not where. His foot, which had been held so long in the jaws

of the cruel trap, ached dreadfully. But that was nothing to the fear in his heart.

At last the long journey ended. It was a long journey to the young Heron. It ended at Farmer Brown's barn. Of course, the young Heron never had been in a building before and it seemed like a terrible cave. Farmer Brown's Boy put him down very carefully and gently, keeping the coat around him in such a way that his wings could not be used. There was nothing he could do but lie there. Farmer Brown's Boy left him for a few minutes. When he returned, he brought some strips of clean white cloth, some warm water and other things.

Very gently he examined that hurt foot. "It is a lucky thing that there was a little stick caught between the jaws of that trap with your foot," said he softly. "Otherwise I am afraid the bones would have been crushed so that you would have lost that foot."

Gently he bathed that wounded foot in warm water into which he had poured something from a bottle. It was something to make the hurt foot wholly clean. Then he covered it with an ointment and carefully wound a strip of cloth around it, tying it in such a way that there were no ends for the young Heron to pick at.

By this time somehow the young Heron was getting over his dreadful

fear. This two-legged giant was very gentle. The warm water and the ointment already had taken away some of the ache from that foot. Perhaps this giant was not an enemy after all, but a friend. The coat was untied and he was taken into a little room and there he was gently placed on the floor on his one sound foot. He was free in that little room. He stood on one foot and blinked at Farmer Brown's Boy. He was learning many things, chief among them that there are tender hearts even among the two-legged giants called men.

CHAPTER XXVII

A QUEER FRIENDSHIP

Friendship, stanch through every test,
Of all that life can give is best.

Longlegs.

"You never can tame a Heron," said Farmer Brown, as he peeped in at the little room in which the young Heron was a prisoner.

Farmer Brown's Boy smiled. "Wait until I have fed him a few times and perhaps you will change your mind," said he. "I started fishing this morning because I *wanted* to go fishing. Now I guess I'll *have* to go fishing. I have an idea it will take a lot of fish to satisfy

that fellow's appetite. I don't know of anything to feed him but fish and frogs."

So once more Farmer Brown's Boy went whistling across the Green Meadows. He found his fishing rod where he had left it when he went over to the swamp to find out what Sammy Jay had been making such a fuss about. Then he went on to the Smiling Pool and began to fish. But instead of trying to catch big fish, he now fished only for little ones. For the first time in his life he was n't interested in big fish. He wanted little ones and plenty of them. So he put on a very small hook and fished for minnows and little perch. You see, he was n't

fishing for himself, but for that young Heron back in the barn.

When he had caught a dozen he wound up his line and started for home. As he stepped into the little room where the Heron was, the longlegged bird stared at him with suspicion, and as he stepped forward drew back his neck as if to strike. Farmer Brown's Boy spoke softly. Then he tossed one of the little fish down in front of the Heron. For a long time the Heron refused to touch it. Farmer Brown's Boy was patient. Finally hunger was too much for the young Heron; he picked up the little fish and swallowed it head-first at one gulp. Then he blinked at Farmer Brown's Boy and the

latter tossed another fish to him. There was not so long a wait this time. The third little fish was picked up almost as soon as it touched the floor.

Two days later that young Heron was taking fish from the hand of Farmer Brown's Boy and not grabbing at them, either. If Farmer Brown's Boy gave them to him tails first he always turned them so that they went down his long throat head first. And he always swallowed a fish at one gulp. It tickled Farmer Brown's Boy.

"You don't get any pleasure out of eating," said he.

But apparently the young Heron thought otherwise, for he was al-

ways ready to gulp down another. Several fish a day it took to keep him satisfied, so that Farmer Brown's Boy had to go fishing every evening after work. But he did n't mind. He and the young Heron were becoming friends. The big bird would allow him to handle him as he pleased. He never offered to strike with that great bill of his. He would even take the hand of Farmer Brown's Boy in that great bill and gently shake it. There was no longer fear or wildness in his eyes when Farmer Brown's Boy entered the room, but instead a strange look of pleasure.

Day by day the poor hurt foot healed and at last it was well.

The bandages were removed for good, and the young Heron walked as well as ever. Once more Farmer Brown's Boy gathered him up in his arms, but this time no coat was wrapped about him. They were friends and the big bird did n't in the least mind being carried.

Down across the Green Meadow tramped Farmer Brown's Boy to the swamp on the edge of the Big River. At the place where he had found the young Heron fast in the dreadful trap he put him down. Then he fed him three fish and turned back. The young Heron watched him go. Lonesomeness swept over him. He croaked harshly, as if to call Farmer Brown's Boy back. But almost at

once his call was answered by a glad cry, glad despite its harshness, and a great bird dropped down beside him. It was his mother, Mrs. Longlegs. So for a time Farmer Brown's Boy was forgotten.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE RETURN OF LONGLEGS

Good fortune nothing sweeter sends
Than chance to meet and greet old friends.

Longlegs.

THE summer had passed, then winter, and now it was spring again. Peter Rabbit found these April days very busy days. They were very lovely days, with sunshine and shower and green things springing up everywhere. Peter spent a great deal of time roaming about, time which he really should have spent at home in the dear Old Briar-patch. Peter is one of the most lovable little fellows in all

the Great World, but I am afraid he is selfish. You see, he leaves all the care of the family to little Mrs. Peter. Yes, sir, he does so.

Now Peter was over by the Smiling Pool, where he spent much of his time. It was very pleasant over there. Then, too, it was easy to get to by following the Laughing Brook down through the alders. Peter felt quite safe there, because always he could scamper into the alders at the first hint of danger. Peter spent so much time there because Smiling Pool is a great place for news. A great deal happens there. You know, in the springtime it is a very busy place, and there are many people in and about the Smiling Pool.

"Is n't it most time for Longlegs the Great Blue Heron to arrive?" Peter asked of Redwing the Blackbird, who was pouring out the joy of his heart from the top of an alder bush.

"If you ask me, I should say it is time for everybody to arrive," replied Redwing, who was so bubbling over with joy because he was back that he could n't understand why everybody was n't as early as he.

"Did I hear some one mention my name?" inquired a rather harsh voice.

Peter gave a start. He sat up and he looked all about. He could n't see any one that that voice fitted. You know, voices do fit sometimes.

"What did you say?" inquired Peter, in a very polite voice.

"I asked if I heard some one mentioning my name," said the same harsh voice.

Still Peter stared. He could n't seem to tell just where that voice came from. It gave him a queer feeling.

"If you please," said he, "I don't know who you are or where you are."

"That is queer," said the voice. "You mentioned me by name, and now you say you don't know who I am. It 's a wonder you don't say you don't know what I am."

"I don't," replied Peter.

"Well, I'll tell you that much," said the voice. "I am a fisherman.

Yes, sir, I am a fisherman. And here comes a fish!"

There was a sudden motion just across from where Peter was sitting. It was so quick that it was all Peter could do to follow it. A head at the end of a long neck, and having a long, sharp bill, darted forward and down and back again. And then Peter saw Longlegs the Heron. He saw him toss a little fish into the air and catch it head down. Then he saw that little fish go down that long throat. I don't mean that he actually saw the fish go down the throat, for of course he could n't see inside the throat of Longlegs, but he saw a series of queer movements in that long neck as Longlegs swallowed.

"Oh!" cried Peter. "I am so glad to see you, Longlegs! Why didn't I see you before?"

"I don't know," replied Longlegs. "I was right here. I saw you. There was no reason why you shouldn't have seen me."

You and I know why Peter didn't see Longlegs. Longlegs had remained motionless, and so, though Peter had looked right at him a dozen times, it was just as if he had not been there at all. It was only when he moved that Peter saw him.

CHAPTER XXIX

PETER GAINS KNOWLEDGE

Who is too fussy what he eats
Himself of much enjoyment cheats.

Longlegs.

MANY a time had Peter Rabbit watched Longlegs standing, often on one leg, without motion for so long that Peter himself fairly ached. Many a time had he seen Longlegs catch fish and frogs. Many a time had he watched those wonderful great wings spread, while with his head tucked back between his shoulders, and his long legs streaming out behind him, Longlegs had flapped away, over towards the Big River. Had you asked Peter,

he would have told you that he knew all about Longlegs the Great Blue Heron. But Peter is like a great many people that you and I know — he is content to know a little and think it is all there is to know. I know a lot of people like that; don't you?

Peter was sitting at some little distance from Longlegs, for Longlegs was fishing and no fisherman likes to be disturbed. Just above Peter sat Redwing the Blackbird. Redwing was singing and Peter was — well, Peter was just sitting. That is the best thing Peter does. He can sit as long as any one I know of — sit perfectly motionless. Longlegs was standing as still as Peter was sitting. By and by, he

came to life very suddenly. Down darted his long neck and the long bill snapped a little fish out of the water so quickly that all Peter saw was a little flash of silver. Then he saw Longlegs swallow that fish and once more Longlegs settled down to be perfectly still.

"Longlegs is one of the best fishermen I know of," said Redwing admiringly.

"I suppose he is a good fisherman," said Peter, "but I should think he would get tired of fish. My goodness! Just think of having fish for breakfast, fish for dinner, and fish for supper!"

Redwing looked down at Peter and his eyes twinkled. "I know it," said he, "and just think of

having clover for breakfast and clover for dinner and clover for supper."

Peter sat up very suddenly. "What's the matter with that?" he demanded. "There's nothing better than fine sweet clover."

Redwing chuckled right out. "Probably Longlegs would tell you that there is nothing finer than fine fresh fish."

Peter saw the point and grinned. "Well, anyhow," said he, "I do eat things besides sweet clover."

"And Longlegs eats things besides fish," replied Redwing.

"I suppose you mean frogs and tadpoles, but it seems to me that they are so near like fish they don't count," replied Peter.

"Guess again," retorted Redwing, "and while you are guessing, watch Longlegs."

Peter looked over at Longlegs, or rather Peter looked over to where Longlegs had been. Then he looked around hastily. Longlegs was not standing at the edge of the water. He was back a little way on the Green Meadows and he was walking along slowly, but watchfully. Suddenly that long bill of his shot down, just as Peter had seen it shoot down after fish. But it was n't a fish that Longlegs prepared to swallow this time. No, sir, it was n't a fish. It was a mouse. It was a young Meadow Mouse.

"You see," said Redwing,

"Longlegs is a hunter as well as a fisherman; and you see he does n't live on fish altogether. Well, well, here comes another fisherman."

Peter turned. Headed straight for the Smiling Pool was Billy Mink.

CHAPTER XXX

THE SILLY QUARREL

In quarreling there 's little gain;
It leads to sorrow and to pain.

Longleys.

Peter Rabbit had discovered that Longlegs was a hunter as well as a fisherman. In a way, this was very surprising to Peter. I doubt if he would have believed it had he not seen Longlegs catch and eat a young Meadow Mouse. This only made him more interested in Longlegs, and almost every day Peter visited the Smiling Pool just to try to learn more about that long-legged fisherman and hunter.

Sometimes Longlegs would n't come to the Smiling Pool at all. Then Peter would be sadly disappointed. Sometimes he would be quite talkative, and sometimes he would n't talk at all.

It happened one morning that Billy Mink came early to the Smiling Pool and sat on the Big Rock. Hardly had Billy climbed up there when Longlegs the Heron came sailing in from the Big River. Billy saw him coming. "I hope," thought Billy, "that fellow will have sense enough to do his fishing on the other side of the Smiling Pool. There is no place for him here, I can tell him that. This is my side of the Smiling Pool."

But Longlegs was evidently of

another opinion, for just beside the Big Rock he dropped his long legs and alighted on the edge of the Smiling Pool. Then, after stretching his great wings high above his back, he settled into a comfortable position for a long, patient watch.

Longlegs did n't see Billy, but of course Billy saw Longlegs. Billy was so angry that he almost danced up and down on the Big Rock. But he held his tongue. Yes, sir, he held his tongue, and you may be sure he did n't dance. In fact, he did nothing at all to make Longlegs notice him.

From a short distance away, Peter Rabbit watched and wondered what would happen if both should try to catch the same fish. How

he did wish that a fish would swim within reach of both. But the fish must have known better. Anyway, none swam that way. At least, none swam that way for a long time. Billy continued to sit motionless on the Big Rock and Longlegs continued to stand motionless at the water's edge. Peter had about decided that he was glad that he was n't a fisherman, for fishermen must always have so much patience, when at last things happened. They happened all at once. That long spearlike bill of Longlegs shot down and at the same instant Billy Mink also shot down. Neither one got the fish. Between them, they frightened away all the fish from that part of the Smiling Pool.

Then began such a foolish quarrel as never was before.

"That was my fish!" screamed Billy.

"Why did n't you catch it then?" retorted Longlegs. "It was my fish and you had no business to interfere."

"I did n't interfere with you; you interfered with me!" stormed Billy. "Why don't you stick to the Big River to do your fishing and leave honest people alone?"

"Honest people!" cried Longlegs. "Honest people! I suppose you call yourself honest, trying to take a fish right out of my very mouth!"

"It was n't your fish; it was my fish!" shrieked Billy.

Just then there was a heavy plunge in the middle of the Smiling Pool. Billy and Longlegs looked over there hastily. Rising from the water was Plunger the Osprey, and in his claws was a plump fish. It was n't the one they had tried to catch. It was a much bigger one than the one they had tried to catch. The sight of it turned their anger on Plunger, and they both fell to screaming, "Thief! Thief! Thief!" at him, which was quite as silly as had been their quarrel in the first place.

RISING FROM THE WATER WAS PLUNGER THE OSPREY.

CHAPTER XXXI

LONGLEGS IS PROUD OF HIS NAME

Be not deceived by fickle fame,
There 's very little in a name.

Longlegs.

PETER RABBIT was beginning to feel quite well acquainted with Longlegs. When Longlegs had had good luck fishing, he often was very good-natured and ready to talk. Then it was that Peter learned much about Longlegs.

"You belong to a good-sized family, don't you?" asked Peter.

Longlegs nodded. "A fairly good-sized family," said he; "a fairly good-sized family. Of course,

you know my cousin, Quawk the Night Heron, and my still smaller cousin, Poke the Green Heron."

Peter nodded. "Of course I do," said he. "I knew them before ever I knew you. I suppose you are the largest of the family."

Longlegs nodded. "I suppose I am," said he.

"You know he's a Crane, the Blue Crane," interrupted Redwing the Blackbird, who had been listening.

Longlegs looked up quickly. "No such thing!" he snapped. "I'm not a Crane. I'm a Heron — as true a Heron as ever breathed. What people call me a Crane for, I don't understand. The idea of calling me a Blue Crane!"

Peter was thoughtfully scratching a long ear with a long hind foot. "Is there any such person as a Crane?" he ventured to inquire.

"There certainly is," replied Longlegs. "But Cranes are of another family altogether. The Crane family may be a nice enough family, but I am proud of my own family, and I don't like being called what I am not."

"Perhaps you'd like being called a Stork better," interrupted Redwing. "It seems to me I've heard you called a Stork."

"I don't doubt it," replied Longlegs bitterly. "It is queer to me how ignorant some people are. I am no more a Stork than I am a

Crane. Why, I have actually known people to call me Sandy the Crane, meaning the Sandhill Crane; and there is a real true Sandhill Crane. I don't know what those folks would call him if they should see Sandy. I'm a Heron, and there's all the difference in the world between Herons and Cranes and Storks. I suppose it is just because my legs are long. What's the good of a name, anyway, if you can't have it to yourself?"

"I suppose," said Peter, "that you spent the winter in the Sunny South."

"Well, if I had n't, I would n't be here now," retorted Longlegs. "How under the sun do you sup-

pose I could have lived up here with the snow and ice? Certainly, I spent the winter in the Sunny South."

"There is one thing you ought to be thankful for, and that is that you are not hunted like Mr. and Mrs. Quack, the Ducks. They have to worry all the time they are making that long journey twice a year, and I think it is dreadful," said Peter.

"Huh!" retorted Longlegs. "You seem to think I don't have anything to worry about. Mr. and Mrs. Quack, once they have reached their nesting grounds, can nest in peace and forget their worries. I can't. Do you see that gap in my wing?" He spread a long

wing and, sure enough, several of the feathers were missing.

Peter nodded. "How did it happen?" he asked.

"Guns, terrible guns," replied Longlegs. "I lost those on my way up here, and during the summer I never know when somebody is going to shoot at me. It makes me terribly nervous."

"Why do they shoot at you, Longlegs?" inquired Peter innocently.

CHAPTER XXXII

LONGLEGS EXPLAINS

Who listens well will knowledge gain
If wiser folk will but explain.

Longlegs.

Longlegs the Heron had just told Peter Rabbit that he, Longlegs, often was shot at, and Peter had wanted to know why.

"Don't ask me," replied Longlegs. "Why do these hunters with terrible guns shoot at any one?"

"They shoot at Mr. and Mrs. Quack because they want them to eat," said Peter. "Do they want you to eat?"

"I don't know," replied Longlegs. "How should I know? It's enough for me that they shoot at me so often. I have an idea it's because I catch a few fish. These two-legged creatures called men seem to think that anything they want belongs to them. I don't know why I haven't just as much right to catch fish as they have. I like trout just as well as they do. But when I catch a few trout, I'm through. I don't catch a whole lot of them, the way men do. Yet I never was fishing on a trout stream and was discovered by one of those two-legged creatures that he didn't appear to be angry and do his best to drive me away.

Now, I ask you if that is fair."

"No," said Peter most decidedly, "it is n't fair."

Just then there was a splash in the water over near the edge of the Smiling Pool where some bulrushes grow. Peter looked over there. There was Mr. Watersnake and in his mouth was a small trout. Longlegs looked over and saw Mr. Watersnake and took two or three angry steps towards him. Mr. Watersnake just slid off into the water out of sight.

"There!" sputtered Longlegs. "There! You saw that, did n't you?"

"Yes, I saw it," replied Peter. "What of it?"

"What of it?" cried Longlegs.

"What of it? Didn't you see what he had in his mouth?"

"Yes," replied Peter. "It was a little fish."

"It was a little trout," stormed Longlegs.

"Well, what of it?" replied Peter. "He had just as much right to it as you."

"Certainly he had," replied Longlegs, "but do you think he'll be blamed for taking it? Not much! He and all his brothers and sisters and uncles and aunts and cousins go up and down the Laughing Brook, living on trout, and I get blamed for taking the trout. These two-legged creatures called men haven't any sense. Most of them don't see beyond

their noses. They see me on a brook, fishing. When the fish become scarce, they blame me, when all the time Mr. Watersnake and his family are catching ten fish to my one. Sometimes I think there is n't any justice in this world. Those Watersnakes can catch trout and keep out of sight. I fish openly and honestly and get shot at because of it. Most of the trout the Watersnake family eat are charged up to me, and there you are!"

"It 's too bad, Longlegs," said Peter, shaking his head solemnly. "It 's too bad. I should feel that way if I were in your place. It is a dreadful thing to be blamed for what another does. I can

get into trouble enough myself without being blamed for the troubles that others get into."

CHAPTER XXXIII

LONGLEGS DEPARTS

Alas! Alas! That fear of man
Should enter into every plan.

Longlegs.

Longlegs had been fishing along the Laughing Brook and along the Smiling Pool for several days, and every day Peter Rabbit had been over to make a call on him. Then came a morning when Peter went over to pay his respects and Longlegs was n't at the Smiling Pool. Neither could Peter see him anywhere along the Laughing Brook below the Smiling Pool. But Longlegs had been late before, so Peter

did n't think much about it, one way or another. He simply sat himself down to wait.

At last Peter saw Longlegs coming. When he was just opposite where Peter was sitting, he dropped his long legs and straightened up.

"I am glad you are here, Peter Rabbit," said he. "I was afraid you might not be."

"Why are you glad I am here?" inquired Peter, looking surprised.

"Because," replied Longlegs, "I did n't want to go away without saying good-by."

"What are you going away for?" demanded Peter, looking still more surprised.

"I am going because it is time to go," replied Longlegs. "I am

going because Mrs. Longlegs will be wanting to have a nest."

"But where are you going?" inquired Peter.

"That's telling," replied Longlegs.

"Aren't you going to nest around here?" asked Peter.

"No," replied Longlegs. "There is no place around here that would suit us at all. We are going farther north to a certain quiet little lake hidden in the Great Forest. There are plenty of fish there. No one is likely to disturb our nest. It is high time I was on my way. So I have come to say good-by, Peter. Perhaps I'll see you on my way back in the fall. Anyway, I hope I will. I shall look for you."

"But your cousin, Quawk, and your little cousin, Poke the Green Heron, don't go away up north to nest," protested Peter. "They nest near here. I don't see why you can't nest here if they do."

"They are smaller than I," replied Longlegs. "They are not likely to be bothered as I am. Besides, I told you the other day how those two-legged creatures called men try to shoot me with terrible guns. If I should nest down here, they would be sure to find my nest and probably would destroy it."

"Farmer Brown's Boy wouldn't," said Peter stoutly.

"True enough! True enough!" replied Longlegs. "I know Farmer

Brown's Boy would n't. But there are others who would, and Farmer Brown's Boy would n't be able to stop them. No, Peter, I must go on just as Mr. and Mrs. Quack have had to go on. I 'm going to catch one more fish and then I 'm off."

"I hope that fish does n't come along for a long time," said Peter, but he said it to himself. You see, he really felt bad at the thought of parting with Longlegs, for they had become very good friends.

Peter's wish came true. It was a long time before a fish came within reach of that long bill. When it did come within reach, a most unusual thing happened; Longlegs missed it! It made him feel quite out of sorts. He was of

a mind to start, anyway. But he knew that it would be some time before he would be where he could fish again, so wisely he waited. After a time another fish came within reach, and this time Longlegs did n't miss. He stretched up his neck and gulped that fish down. It was a long neck that fish had to go down. When at last it was way down, Longlegs turned to Peter.

"Good-by, Peter," said he. And hardly waiting for Peter to say "good-by", Longlegs spread his great wings, folded his long neck back until his head rested between his shoulders, and with his long legs trailing behind him like a tail, flew slowly and heavily away.

"I hope nothing will happen to him," sighed Peter, as he watched the great bird fly out of sight, and then he started for the Old Briar-patch and Mrs. Peter Rabbit.

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